


# JUST AMONG FRIENDS

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GEORGE MATTHEW ADAMS





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JUST AMONG FRIENDS

*Build thee more stately mansions, O my  
soul,  
As the swift seasons roll!  
Leave thy low-vaunted past!  
Let each new temple, nobler than the last,  
Shut thee from heaven with a dome more  
vast,  
Till thou at length art free,  
Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's  
unresting sea!*

—OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES.

*"The Chambered Nautilus."*



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# JUST AMONG FRIENDS

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BY GEORGE MATTHEW ADAMS

*Author of "You Can," etc.*

*With an Introduction by*  
WILLIAM ALLEN WHITE



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*To*

RAMONA BRADY

WHO FOR YEARS READ, EDITED, AND MOTHERED MY  
DAILY "TALKS"—AND WHO HELPED SOMEHOW TO KEEP  
ME IN THEM.



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# THE CONTENTS

---

|                         |    |
|-------------------------|----|
| <i>Introduction</i>     | xi |
| JUST AMONG FRIENDS      | 1  |
| THIS VOYAGE             | 2  |
| BEYOND                  | 3  |
| AGE                     | 5  |
| WOMEN                   | 6  |
| GOD                     | 8  |
| THE CRICKET'S CHURR     | 9  |
| DOG HEAVEN              | 10 |
| FATHER AND SON          | 12 |
| WAITING                 | 13 |
| AN OKLAHOMA SUNSET      | 15 |
| BIRDS                   | 16 |
| THE ONLY RELATIONSHIP   | 18 |
| R. G.                   | 19 |
| THE EYES AND MOUTH      | 21 |
| MOTION                  | 22 |
| MR. ENSOR OF MISSOURI   | 23 |
| RECURRING HURTS         | 25 |
| THE SOUL OF THINGS      | 26 |
| THE ARTISTIC LIFE       | 27 |
| DREAMS                  | 29 |
| JUSTICE NOT PITY        | 30 |
| SLEEP SWEETLY           | 31 |
| RAG-BAG MINDS           | 33 |
| DARE TO CHANGE          | 34 |
| THE WRITER AND HIS HIRE | 36 |
| THE JOY                 | 37 |
| ON TRUSTING YOURSELF    | 39 |
| LITTLE ENOUGH           | 40 |
| NANCY HANKS             | 41 |
| FLOWERS                 | 43 |
| SEARCH                  | 44 |
| THE FURNISHED HEART     | 45 |
| APPRECIATION            | 47 |
| THE HARD JOBS           | 48 |
| NEIGHBORING             | 49 |
| THE EFFICIENT HEART     | 50 |

---

# CONTENTS

---

|                           |   |   |   |   |    |
|---------------------------|---|---|---|---|----|
| THROWING THINGS OUT       | . | . | . | . | 52 |
| THE DESERT                | . | . | . | . | 53 |
| O THOU, WHOE'ER THOU ART  | . | . | . | . | 54 |
| GREATNESS                 | . | . | . | . | 56 |
| I BELIEVE IN YOU          | . | . | . | . | 57 |
| THE WORKMAN               | . | . | . | . | 58 |
| THE STAR THAT FALLS       | . | . | . | . | 59 |
| DOUBT                     | . | . | . | . | 61 |
| SON-TO-BE                 | . | . | . | . | 62 |
| SOIL                      | . | . | . | . | 63 |
| THE FOG                   | . | . | . | . | 65 |
| NEW AND OLD BOOKS         | . | . | . | . | 66 |
| THE LESSON OF NIGHT       | . | . | . | . | 67 |
| FOLLOWING MORNINGS        | . | . | . | . | 69 |
| DESIRE FOR ACCOMPLISHMENT | . | . | . | . | 70 |
| HIS ROMANCE               | . | . | . | . | 71 |
| PEOPLE ARE LIKE BOOKS     | . | . | . | . | 72 |
| STILLNESS OF THE NIGHT    | . | . | . | . | 73 |
| BEAUTY EVERYWHERE         | . | . | . | . | 75 |
| BELONGINGS                | . | . | . | . | 76 |
| THE THOROUGHbred MAN      | . | . | . | . | 77 |
| A BEAUTIFUL FACE          | . | . | . | . | 78 |
| THE PILOT                 | . | . | . | . | 80 |
| LITTLE TUMBLE-INS OF TIME | . | . | . | . | 81 |
| PUBLIC OPINION            | . | . | . | . | 82 |
| DOGS AND BABIES           | . | . | . | . | 84 |
| FRAGRANCE OF SPIRIT       | . | . | . | . | 85 |
| LARGE, STILL FOLKS        | . | . | . | . | 86 |
| CRUSHED HEARTS            | . | . | . | . | 87 |
| WINDS                     | . | . | . | . | 89 |
| THE DESIRE TO POSSESS     | . | . | . | . | 90 |
| THE DIGNITY OF LIFE       | . | . | . | . | 91 |
| 84 YEARS OF A MAN         | . | . | . | . | 93 |
| UNDUSTED HEARTS           | . | . | . | . | 94 |
| BETTER THAN GOLD          | . | . | . | . | 95 |
| EXTRAVAGANCE              | . | . | . | . | 97 |
| INDIAN SUMMER             | . | . | . | . | 98 |
| DIRT                      | . | . | . | . | 99 |

---

# CONTENTS

---

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| THE CHILD'S LIFE . . . . .               | 101 |
| SACRIFICE . . . . .                      | 102 |
| UNDER THE SILENT TREES . . . . .         | 103 |
| BREAKFAST . . . . .                      | 105 |
| WE TAKE A CRUISE . . . . .               | 106 |
| TWO GIRLS . . . . .                      | 108 |
| ON THE READING OF BOOKS . . . . .        | 109 |
| ON THE TRAIN . . . . .                   | 111 |
| ROAMERS OF THE FOREST . . . . .          | 112 |
| ART IN THE HEART . . . . .               | 113 |
| THE SERVILITY OF IMITATION . . . . .     | 115 |
| THEY WILL TALK ANYWAY . . . . .          | 116 |
| INTIMATE THINGS . . . . .                | 117 |
| SYMPATHY THROUGH UNDERSTANDING . . . . . | 118 |
| THE AWAKENING . . . . .                  | 119 |
| JUST A FARMER . . . . .                  | 121 |
| THOUGHTS . . . . .                       | 122 |
| SHADOWS AND THE LIGHT . . . . .          | 123 |
| THE PRAYER OF ONE DISTURBED . . . . .    | 124 |
| BEGINNINGS . . . . .                     | 126 |
| WINTER . . . . .                         | 127 |
| IF I SHOULD GO BROKE . . . . .           | 128 |
| ON STARTING ALL OVER . . . . .           | 129 |
| LITTLE SINGERS . . . . .                 | 130 |
| TO YOU WHO ARE ALONE . . . . .           | 132 |
| THE RICH PERSONALITY . . . . .           | 133 |
| TWO RED BOOKS . . . . .                  | 134 |
| VOICES . . . . .                         | 136 |
| CLEAN UP AS YOU GO . . . . .             | 137 |
| THE RAIN . . . . .                       | 138 |
| THAT SOMEBODY . . . . .                  | 139 |
| AMUSEMENTS . . . . .                     | 140 |
| A PRAYER FOR A PAL . . . . .             | 142 |
| WHERE IS HAPPINESS . . . . .             | 143 |
| TO BE A TREE . . . . .                   | 144 |
| JUST A WHITE SHEET OF PAPER . . . . .    | 146 |
| SURPRISES . . . . .                      | 147 |
| THE WORLD OF MAKE-BELIEVE . . . . .      | 148 |

---

# CONTENTS

---

|                         |   |   |   |   |   |     |
|-------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|-----|
| SPEND A LITTLE          | . | . | . | . | . | 150 |
| PUNISHMENT              | . | . | . | . | . | 151 |
| A COMPANIONATE MARRIAGE | . | . | . | . | . | 152 |
| MASTERY OVER FORTUNE    | . | . | . | . | . | 153 |
| DOES IT PAY TO PRAY?    | . | . | . | . | . | 155 |
| THE DROP-OUT LIFE       | . | . | . | . | . | 156 |
| AUTUMNAL GLORY          | . | . | . | . | . | 157 |
| WOMAN COURAGE           | . | . | . | . | . | 159 |
| O, SLEEP                | . | . | . | . | . | 160 |
| HANDS                   | . | . | . | . | . | 161 |
| AN EVENING PRAYER       | . | . | . | . | . | 163 |
| TO ONE IN SORROW        | . | . | . | . | . | 164 |
| OUR SILENT GUEST        | . | . | . | . | . | 165 |
| THE RADIANT PERSONALITY | . | . | . | . | . | 167 |
| THE STUMBLER            | . | . | . | . | . | 168 |
| TO A MOTHER LONG GONE   | . | . | . | . | . | 169 |
| THE PELICAN             | . | . | . | . | . | 170 |
| REBECCA MCCANN          | . | . | . | . | . | 172 |
| THE FALLEN LEAVES       | . | . | . | . | . | 173 |
| IDEALS                  | . | . | . | . | . | 174 |
| GOOD NIGHT!             | . | . | . | . | . | 175 |



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## INTRODUCTION

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**I**N NO OTHER COUNTRY in the world is aspiration so definite a part of life as it is in America. The most precious gift God has given to this land is not its great riches of soil and forest and mine but the divine discontent planted deeply in the hearts of the American people. Every one expects to go further than his father went; every one expects to be better than he was born and every generation has one big impulse in its heart—to exceed all the other generations of the past in all the things that make life worth living.

The restless, unconquerable aspiration that is in the heart of all Americans is one thing that has abolished caste and broken class lines in America and thus has distinguished us from every other race or people on the globe.

We have indeed and in truth made opportunity free—not by legislation, nor by any institutions we have established. Given our constitution, the Egyptians would be castebound, a race of slaves in spite of super-imposed institutions. Take away our constitution and we would soon again reinstitutionalize freedom. The aspiration in our hearts would do it.

This book by George Matthew Adams is one of the manifestations of that vital force which is America's greatest treasure. Our literature is full of it. It inspires our best poetry, furnishes the theme for our greatest prose and is the mainspring for our

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## INTRODUCTION

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*national fiction, and gives our oratory its only American characteristic.*

*Upward change, from the simple to the more complex, progress. This is the spirit of America and this book will be read by those who understand Americanism, whether they are natives or foreign born.*

WILLIAM ALLEN WHITE

JUST AMONG FRIENDS





## *JUST AMONG FRIENDS*



THESE brief Talks have appeared each day for fifteen years in nearly 100 newspapers throughout America and Canada. In big towns and small towns. They go into all sorts of homes and are read off and on by all types of minds.

There is no pretense to literary perfection. They are talks among friends—unseen and unknown friends. For, is not a friend one who understands?

They are written mostly at night—at the end of busy days—when it is best to forget all the annoyances and petty irritations of the day, when it is good to meet a friend or two and just talk on any topic that may come into the mind.

The responses to these simple Talks from readers far and wide make the difficult task of writing so much easier, and somehow fortifies a courage that all too often bids fair to lower its colors. It is at such a time, that this writer takes a new grip upon himself, for he then feels more thoroughly than ever that he truly is among friends.

And where on earth could one better be?

A noted Detroit judge once told me that he read these Talks every morning at breakfast time. I was so happy to be so informed that I felt more unworthy than I had ever felt, and I also felt ashamed for not being a better human being. Then the consciousness came to me that he also was a friend, and

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## JUST AMONG FRIENDS

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that he only made up one of those whom I feel constantly are my friends as these brief Talks are typed each day.

What a glorious heritage to be among friends each day in all parts of a big land!

I believe that the hunger of America is the hunger for growth. I believe that there is implanted in every human a desire to rise higher, and that there are hidden purposes flanking aspirations that only the individual knows and understands.

We get such a happy vision of life when we look around us and feel that those who are of us a part are our friends indeed.

### ✻ THIS VOYAGE ✻

TODAY I passed a mother wheeling her baby. I stopped to look into that baby face so fresh and full of bloom, like the softness of a pink rose.

I tried to visualize the great journey that had just begun though of no concern to those baby eyes.

But in just a few short years that helpless life in the cart will be looking life in the face and will be asking strange questions of it.

It will say: "Why am I here? Where am I to go? What places am I to visit? Who am I to talk to? Who shall I trust? Tell me all about this voyage."

We who have sailed the seas, who have known fear in the storms, looked God in the eyes, and stumbled in the dark, know that this voyage of life



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## JUST AMONG FRIENDS

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is full of peril, heartaches, and problems, as well as beauty, love and opportunity.

But as we arise each morning we are faced with that blazing sentence: "*It doth not yet appear what we shall be!*"

And so we travel on, hope on, strive on, and believe. What would this voyage be without faith and belief in somebody higher and really infinite?

Our ports are concealed from us. We never know exactly where we will be next year—or even next week. And as to our ultimate destination, we are also kept in ignorance—a silent pilot guiding our little bark under sealed orders.

So, let us just be brave about this voyage, do our daily tasks gladly and keep giving of all that we are, so that when the final port is reached, we may leave our craft freshened by every wind, clean in our heart, and ready to greet those who have waited for so long the coming of our boat.



### BEYOND



WHEN this Talk was written Miss Carol Hovius a young girl of 20 was visiting the great galleries of Europe feverishly filling her mind with every bit of beauty possible to crowd in during a brief space of time.

Gardens, art centres, historic scenes, cities and peoples were being noted. The fading lights in this girl's eyes were searching as few eyes ever do. She was storing her mind to the brim, fortifying herself

against the dark years ahead, for she had been told that she had but a year at the most in which she would retain her sight.

And so this heroic girl accepted her fate, without a murmur, determined to gather wealth in beauty that she might be a useful and helpful member in the world.

An honor graduate of the University of Wisconsin, and a member of the Phi Beta Kappa, she taught school for a year in Iowa, when at a Christmas time she was told by experts that she was afflicted with a rare disease that would blind her for life.

But there was no delaying. The world must be seen—as much of it as possible—so that in her life beyond the light she might give, in her way, of what she had. She wrote back to friends—but no mention of her approaching night.

It is said that she is a poetess of promise. Perhaps, in her blindness, she will be able to see much that we, with our seeing eyes, fail to see.

I am thinking of Helen Keller, who was born blind, but who graduated from a great college with high honors and who has been such an inspiring, beautiful character in this world.

Just to inherit the light is to be born rich.

But with this light if there is inbred a desire to see and understand, a craving for the beautiful in Nature and people's hearts, then one is more than merely blessed.

If you carry beauty in your mind and heart, there are worlds and worlds beyond!

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## JUST AMONG FRIENDS

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### ✱ AGE ✱

I REALLY do not know how old I am. I know the number of years that I have lived. But years are only relative after all.

I have met men and women whose age I could never guess. The mind and heart are the only true indicators of age.

Personally, years do not deceive me. I know that I must look all the years that I am. For Nature plans out the looks of people; but when we in our deepest selves love the things that Nature stands for freely, then, we too live naturally and are happiest.

Never worry about your age. You can't go back and pick up a dozen years and drown them as you might a dozen kittens.

It isn't the years that count anyway. It's what you do with the years. The man who has a million dollars today may not have them a year from today. Whereas some men who have not anything today may be worth millions a year from today. It all depends upon the amount of brains and concentration that are put into tasks, plus luck, perhaps.

If you keep pouring youth into each year instead of old age, then you will grow old gracefully and happily, not noticing that the lovely years of vital youth have stepped aside for the more mature years of life's evening.

Youth will reign forever if you give it the choice place in your heart.

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## JUST AMONG FRIENDS

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There is something beautiful, strange, mysterious, and wonderful about every season of the year. And there is something just as fine and happy about every period of your life. The youth envies the grown man—and the grown man looks upon youth and often shakes his head, alike longing a little for that which has passed.

But the wisest man looks upon all change and advancing years as something that has given him development.

For that is what age is—a development. All life is growth. Nothing good ever dies permanently.

### ✻ WOMEN ✻

THERE is no need for women to fear for their influence upon the world. For while men have largely been the builders of the cities, the railroads, the steamships, the bridges, and the battleships, women have been the ones who have largely built the men.

Also, they have furnished the boys that are used in War for targets!

I have just finished reading a most interesting story of Northcliffe, the great English publisher, written by his friend, R. Macnair Wilson. It is the story of a boy who had ideas and ideals, and a will to work them out for the benefit of mankind. No boy ever faced more discouragements, and fought braver against odds, than did Alfred Harmsworth, who later became Lord Northcliffe.

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## JUST AMONG FRIENDS

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The author of this story has summed it all up in four words: "*His gospel was clean.*"

But what I want to bring out is that Northcliffe built his great fortune largely because he respected the ideas of women. He depended upon their sense of right, of choice, and of judgment. And when this famous journalist took that last world cruise, just before his death, there wasn't a day but what he received and sent a message to his Mother back in London.

The Mother of Napoleon was the one friend, outside his faithful valet, who stood true to the last.

Before me is the picture of a Mother, small in stature, in comparison with the towering boy beside her. The boy is in a crowded station, amongst hundreds of others. They are going back to College, after their Christmas and New Year's vacation. The Mother of this particular boy clings to him. She kisses him again and again. I could understand. Years ago, I was in that boy's place.

I have been reading a series of books about women who lived and wrought since the early part of the seventeenth century, who influenced their time, and who have passed this influence down to the present. Out-of-the-way women, whom I might call background women. Writers, poets, mothers, wives, teachers.

It is a foolish speculation as to who amounts to the most, men or women. Just what kind of a world would this be without women? Where would its song, its cheer, its sympathy, its sweetness and its strength be without them?

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## JUST AMONG FRIENDS

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### ✻ GOD ✻

I AM not sure about many things, but I am sure about God. I am sure that there is a God in the world. I see Him every day in flowers, in babies' smiles, in kindnesses rendered over and over again, and in the fine deeds that men and women are performing every day.

So many look upon God as a mystery. He isn't a mystery at all. He is as real as beauty is real and as genuine as love itself.

You don't have to go to church to find God, or to learn about Him. But I am sure that God is very real in many churches.

"Eddie" Guest says that he wouldn't want to live in a town where there were no churches. Neither would I. I feel happier in a town where there are many churches. Their very steeples point to something higher and better.

God isn't to be found in all churches, but that isn't His fault.

I always see God in the play of a child. I also see Him in the wag of a dog's tail. It's kindness, and gentleness, and thoughtfulness that make God real and a living presence.

God is always busy about the beds of those who suffer and who have to be confined to their homes, who are deprived of sunshine and the beautiful out-of-doors. The little bird that sits in the trees and sings till its song is wafted far, is an echo of God's love in the world.



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## JUST AMONG FRIENDS

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The simplest mind is drawn to God. And the greatest intellect does not turn from Him. The mightiest minds in all history have believed in God.

Sometimes it takes trouble and disappointment and defeat to make people think of God. But they always do when every other resource has been exhausted. When our weak friends leave us, we think of the strong ones that remain—and turn to them. God is a friend. He is the good in us that so often lies dormant until stress appears.

People who are sure that God is always around and who pray to Him, are the strong leaders and performers in this world.

### ✻ THE CRICKET'S CHURR ✻

FOR days it has rained. I have stood at my window and watched the water driven in torrents against the window panes and swept like a heavy dust along the road.

Crash upon crash in tones which thunder alone can produce, flashes of broken fire spreading the blue sky with flame, have made up the days that have formed the week which I describe.

But tonight the air is still. All is quiet about my room. The smell of the fresh grass and the heavy green of the trees, seeps through the open windows.

I can hear but one sound, however—the churr of the crickets of the night.

I am wondering when these busy little songsters ever sleep. I wonder what they are singing about.

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## JUST AMONG FRIENDS

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I wonder what they think of this world, for they must have some ideas in their cricket way.

Perhaps they are just saying: "Go to bed, go to bed, go to bed!"

At any rate, they must sing for some reason. Maybe because they are happy because of the rain and its blessing to the flowers and the bushes and trees. Who knows?

These little busy bodies don't seem to get tired at all. Hour after hour they churr on. They are of the night. And the night has eyes about which we know nothing. I would like to see in my morning paper an interview with the head cricket who has been leading the concert all evening and far into the night. It must be a very big world to the cricket. But perhaps it doesn't bother him half as much as it does some of us who all too often boast of importance because of size alone.

I like to hear the cricket's churr. Tonight, I shall let its simple song tell me "Good Night." For the crickets are often my sole companions as I write.

You are friendly, little crickets. But I am very tired, so I will do as you say—"Go to Bed!"

### ✻ DOG HEAVEN ✻

OUTSIDE of New York City is a very elaborate cemetery exclusively for dogs. Many costly stones mark the resting places of these dumb beasts. And, strange as it may seem to many, there were scattered all over that place, wreath after wreath

of flowers, at the time I last viewed it around a Christmas time.

Anyone who has ever owned or loved a dog can understand this lavishing of affection. I, at least, am not one to discourage such appreciation for these silent friends.

The last dog that I owned was a remarkable aire-dale. Often of an evening I would ease myself in my chair, push back the little typewriter, and just look down into the eyes of my mute companion—and we understood worlds between us! One day he disappeared, and it was like losing a human friend.

A few feet away from my desk on my bookshelf is a copy of Jerome K. Jerome's book, which was so popular when I was a boy, "*The Idle Thoughts of An Idle Fellow*." In this book, the writer pays his tribute to the dog in this fashion:

*"He is very impudent,—a dog is. He never makes it his business to inquire whether you are in the right or in the wrong, he never bothers as to whether you are going up or down on life's ladder, never asks whether you are rich or poor, silly or wise, sinner or saint. You are his pal. That is enough for him, and come luck or misfortune, good repute or bad, honor or shame, he is going to stick to you, to comfort you, guard you, give his life for you if need be—foolish, brainless, soulless dog!"*

A friend of mine remarked to me the other day that he believed that a dog had intelligence that understood. I believe it. I like, also, to believe that a dog has a soul. Certainly he has what many human beings fail to show as having.

Perhaps there is a dog heaven, too. I hope that there is, and I hope that all the good dogs finally reach that place and that there has been planted in that lovely realm enough soup bones to keep them happy throughout their eternity.

✱ FATHER AND SON ✱

A BOY at college writes to his father. He opens up his heart to him. He tells of the love which he has for this new opportunity to make his life count for something. He enthuses about his work, the interest he has for those about him who also have a purpose in life, and points out the interests that grip him most.

He thanks his father for the chance given him for an education which he determines shall make him fit and able to grapple with the problems of life. He tells frankly of his temptations, of his ambitions, and then closes his letter with the sentence that in all that he does he finds his greatest happiness "*in books, friends, nature, and you.*"

The father who got that letter felt greater pride in his investment than any man could feel over a mere investment in the soundest security in the world.

In looking over my newspaper today, I came across a picture of Henry Ford and his son beside Mr. Ford's new model of his automobile. I studied that picture for quite a while. Then I said to myself that I would wager that this great genius in

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## JUST AMONG FRIENDS

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business was at that very minute prouder of the son model at his side than this mere machine, though it had attracted the attention of the entire world.

What a vacuum in that man's life who has no son!

Every son and every father should read that beautifully intimate book by Warwick Deeping, called "*Sorrell and Son*." It is a story of sacrifice and devotion between father and son that has rarely, if ever, been duplicated.

The boy who makes his father his confidant, is always sure to help make a greater father, at the same time that he is making himself a better son.

A father should always feel happiest when he is adding to the happiness of his son—and it's the same way around with the son.

The task of building a son is far greater than that of building a business. And if that son's character is built aright, his influence for good is able to outlast the greatest institution built through hand or mind.

### \* WAITING \*

WHAT a waiting life this is anyway!

We do what we find to do, or what we are forced to do, or what somebody else says we can do, or ought to do. And then we wait—for our pay, for appreciation, for the future perhaps, to confirm our judgment of selection.

And we wait and wait for the confirmation of our

ideals, for the one friend to appear, and for the one love—the happy one.

Waiting until the day is over and the soothing breath of dusk appears, waiting for bed-time when the touch of a gentle God comforts and alleviates our hurts in sleep.

Waiting for morning, and perhaps the day of days, when at least one of those dreams of ours may come true; stepping softly out of the long night, through the movement of the trees, mingling with the sunbeams, as they dance their early prayers upon the dew of the vines peeping into where our eyes again look at life in the face.

How often have you looked from your window where you live or work, and seen the clouds gather. They rush here and there, as though looking for something lacking before they get right down to the task they set out to do. Then, all of a sudden, the sky becomes a dark velvet mass, like a blanket. The wind whistles. The rain beats in torrents to the earth. Gleaming fire flashes from this phenomenon of the heavens. Roars and rumbles and charges of noise, like a huge war in action, fascinate, perhaps—but you wait, wait for the clearing and the fresh air that has been washed so clean by the storm. You wait for sunshine. For peace and beauty.

The show girl, outside the manager's office, sits and waits—and waits. As she waits she dreams. No one ever knows the dreams she dreams out there, for their substance is her heart.



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## JUST AMONG FRIENDS

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It takes great courage to wait, to go on and on over barren days. But you can do this if your dream is big enough, if your desires are warmed by an understanding heart.

Life will open up for anyone, like the rose, if the ground about it is kept rich enough.

### ✧ *AN OKLAHOMA SUNSET* ✧

Is there anyone who is not thrilled by a gorgeous sunset?

I have a friend who sold his home that cost something like half a million dollars, and built a new one on the opposite side of a strip of land in the Southland, so that he might drink in the glories of the semi-tropic sunsets.

I left Tulsa, Oklahoma, early in the evening. The day was just beginning to darken. I looked out of my car window. One of those inimitable sunsets of the West!

The clouds were formed in a range, and huge mountains of them towered toward the hovering blue above. I was reminded of the gigantic formations of strata so often seen in the far West. Great Alps of vaporous climbings. Peaks that glowed with their silvered caps. And grey blues, like sheets of steel under light. Purples, pinks, golds, were the wrappings that hung from the shoulders of that range of beauty.

And then, far above, as though suspended by an ethereal lace, were other clouds—tossed lazily to

float in rhythmic silence as the golden Sun stole away to its nest for the night.

I thought of the pictures of "The Eternal City" that artists have conceived. But here before me, I imagined must be that very city of light and love.

Here and there were those matchless peekings of silver, running like a streak of newly opened light, and hiding behind the moving bodies of the sky. Delicate corded garments of amber, exquisitely woven—perhaps by the breath of the great God himself.

And then deep below the towering peaks, far away near the horizon, was a massed grey blue that seemed to melt the loveliness of the dying day into the silent sleep of the earth.

For half an hour I had been lost in a riot of beauty. Then I took up my book and tried to read.

But who can read after the feeling that he has just walked out of Heaven?

✻ BIRDS ✻

I WAS talking with a woman once who loved her bird so much that she took it with her on all her long trips, to Europe, Egypt, South America—no matter where.

One of the loveliest and most charming of books about birds, is one by Viscount Grey, the great Foreign Secretary for Great Britain during the World War. He calls his book "*The Charm of Birds*," and he tells how he early took up the study

and love of birds while yet he was a young man. He makes no claims as a scientist—just an everyday lover of birds. His observations are those that any of us might secure by giving the same time and attention to birds.

Viscount Grey was the one with whom Roosevelt made an appointment two years in advance before his African trip that he might learn from Grey the bird calls of England!

And such a study! There are the various species, colors of plumage, the multitude of bird habits that is a fascinating study in itself, migrating, mating, kinds of nests, the home habits of various birds, the care of their young, and the most interesting study of all, the various songs of birds.

The musical qualities of many birds surpass all comparison, so sweet and beautiful are they. Who could forget the song of the nightingale, or song thrush?

On my many trips to the South in the winter, the fondest part of memory must remain that part where the songs of those lovely mocking birds imbedded their love and beauty into my very heart.

I should like to see the study of birds as a regular course in all schools. Surely these beautiful friends of our every day deserve that much.

I can hardly wait for the early springtime so that I may greet my returning song friends of the year before.

Every inducement should be made to attract birds and to make them feel that you want them near. There are many books to be had that give great aid

in helping to make these inhabitants of the out-of-doors much happier because they have us as their friends.

One of the earliest of the returning songsters is the robin, then that tireless, restless, busy, diminutive little bird, the wren. She will wake you early, but who wouldn't be called in the morning by such a tiny lover of life?

✧ *THE ONLY RELATIONSHIP* ✧

**T**HE closest relationship in this life is not that of blood. Life must hold something infinitely higher and nobler than that.

There isn't an element in this human frame of ours but that is duplicated by a same element in the ground upon which we tread.

A very dear friend once gave me a book called "Bypaths in Arcady," and to me it was inscribed with this beautiful original poem:

Life is frail as a breath;  
Vows are a fleeting bond,—  
But love shall be love till death,  
And perhaps beyond.

We only know those people whom we deeply love. And the deeper and purer this love is, the nobler is that understanding which permeates and knits two human souls together. In the beginning it is a comprehension of character. Then the shadows lengthen until a silent spiritual atmosphere

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## JUST AMONG FRIENDS

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pervades, pressing the sweet substance of beauty into the heart forever.

This is the only lasting relationship.

And this accounts for the lonely trail so many tread. But it is a loneliness that is quite satisfactory to him who takes it as his own, for he is a counter of costs, an appraiser of values, and acquainted with disappointment.

When you give of yourself you are indignant of the body you own for a little while, you have no feel for the cut of clothes you wear, you think not at all of what you have achieved or of what manner of man you are—you just climb upstairs into a higher realm.

You rank your kinship with that of the stars. You look about you and feel that God has smiled out of somewhere, very near to you. And then you are happy. As though you were among the immortals.

✱ R. G. ✱

**N**AMES don't matter so much, after all. They called my friend R.G. For 20 years he was my friend.

I introduced myself to him. I knew that the only men he was interested in were those of ideas—and so I went to him with an idea. It took his fancy, and so like a father he stood by me, encouraged me, and advised me and believed in me.

He was a born executive. And he could sell any-

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## JUST AMONG FRIENDS

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thing that he believed in. He became one of the greatest Sales Managers in America and at least one product became a household word around the world because of his genius.

Before leaving New York one spring, I ran into my friend. He was the same jolly, dynamic force as of years gone by. We agreed that a good chat must be arranged on my return to the city. But I shall never see my friend again, for before I returned to the city, at the age of but 51 R.G.'s career was over.

I recall the days when hundreds of salesmen referred to him as "the Daddy of them all." And affectionately called him R.G. Just as we all knew Roosevelt best as T.R.

It was but yesterday, it seems, that I met him—full of all his marvelous energy and vibrant personality. But now the streets seem sadder and the city smaller with my friend gone away.

R.G. never followed. He always led. His courage seemed at times to be almost brazen—so sure was he of his ground when he believed in an idea or a man, and was determined to see a thing through.

When a really great man dies, however, he just begins to live. For then all that he was, that he gave away, begins to grow and bear fruit. Others piece on to such a life and round it out. Each of us must carry on trusts.

Our greatest selves live in others who somehow sift the good and let the rest float away with the wind like chaff from the thresher's machine.



✱ THE EYES AND MOUTH ✱

TO ME the most fascinating features of a face are its eyes and mouth. One the silent, the seeing, the soulful—the other the wistful, the changing, the masterful.

You can talk to an understanding person by looking into his eyes and watching the expression that floats in almost invisible waves about the mouth.

In Rembrandt's portraits, these are the features that he paints from his heart. You first admire, then feel, then own that which this master has painted so truly out of his very life.

In the best portraits of Lincoln you note first the eyes and mouth. A volume could be written about either. For each is the picture of the man.

What we are most, and truest, is what we are in our eyes and mouth. The emotions are shown quickest and surest here. Love shows first in the eyes—and smiles start from the mouth.

I can still feel the warmth of my mother's last kiss, and the softness of her eyes comes again and again to me like a loyal messenger.

I recently studied the death mask of Napoleon. The eyes and mouth were the most striking. I was amazed at the story each told. Those were eyes that were searching, cold and dominant. And the mouth was full of disappointment and bathed in cruelty. Though it was a mouth that was eloquent and full of force. You see no such characterization

in the eyes and mouth of Emerson. Everything is kindly there.

The beauty doctors can add nothing to a naturally beautiful pair of eyes or mouth. They should always stand as they are. Women should bear this in mind.

✱ MOTION ✱

ONE of the most interesting phenomena in all the universe is motion. Everything moves all the time. Even the rock is a mass of atoms that toil and tumble day and night.

The stars in the heavens look still and motionless yet they never sleep! A friend hands me a photograph of the heavens at night taken at Yerkes Observatory. The stars are lengthened dots, so that they resemble short dashes. Why? Simply because the exposure was for several seconds and, being brought so much nearer to its object through the telescope, even the movement was recorded.

As I looked into the garden this morning, the final leaves of gold and brown were leaving their summer heights in the forest for their long sleep against the breast of earth.

The city is a mass of motion. The mind is represented by the brain which is all motion. Even while we sleep our unconscious thoughts roam about, walking over familiar routes, and treading beaten paths.

The sea is loveliest in motion, as is everything.



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## JUST AMONG FRIENDS

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The man who stands still soon dies. He is brushed aside. Motion and movement are life.

But outside the interesting phases of movement as indicative of life, there is that other side of beauty. The motion of the body of the panther or lion, the motion of the flower upon its long stem, the motion of the tree tops in a brisk wind. The motion of the wind itself, even though invisible.

I like to look out of my window in the big city where I live and watch the motion of the street with its people and vehicles.

And who does not love the motion of the out-of-doors no matter where one may be. Something in visible motion all the time.

How beautiful the motion or movement of a finely gowned woman, or the movement of a running child with its arms full of dangling dolls!

### ✧ MR. ENSOR OF MISSOURI ✧

THE mail carrier of the air seems to be getting all the fame.

This writer would like to call the attention of those, who may happen to read this brief Talk, to a mail carrier who has won rare distinction on land!

My friends, meet Mr. Ensor of Monroe County, Missouri, who has been a rural mail carrier for 25 years, and who probably holds the world's record for distance traveling in one county. Mr. Ensor has walked 185,000 miles in this county and has blinked at rain storms, smiled at sunny days, and

dodged cyclones—just to deliver his letters to the waiting ones at the door.

Think of the maids who have slyly smiled at this intrepid servant of the country, as he handed them their first letters of love, of the anxious mothers with their entire thoughts centered upon the "mail man" who might bring them the first news from a boy only recently gone to the city to "carve his fortune." Or, perhaps, a writer waiting for his first check,—or rejection slip!

Is there a public servant in all the land more deserving of honor and reward than the postman who walks and walks, smiles when he doesn't feel like it, talks little, and does his job day in and day out, regardless of the weather or election returns?

Mr. Ensor deserves a vote of Congress in thanks, and a medal, but I have an idea that he would much prefer a vote from Congress increasing the pay of such faithful servants of the people as he has proved. For I am wondering if there are a poorer paid lot of public servants anywhere than the mail carriers?

What a courageous, faithful, and uncomplaining group are these mail carriers of ours!

Mr. Ensor should write his memoirs. They would comprise an interesting book I am sure. Think of the babies he could write about, to many of whom he later was pleased to deliver letters. And the marriages, divorces, deaths. Nothing escapes the mail man. Especially one who has traveled for 25 years in the same county, over the same paths.

If the Congressmen at Washington need an expert, a specialist, to consult as to the future and betterment of the mail service on land, what better man to send for than this same Mr. Ensor of Monroe County, Missouri?

✧ RECURRING HURTS ✧

ALL of us go through life with an increasing number of hurts that we carry with us in our hearts. Some of these come to us when we are very young. A very few fade from our memory.

But most of us carry scars from hurts ever with us.

And these scars redden, and the deep hurt of yesterday returns to give us sorrow and unhappiness.

The important fact about life is that it is very deep, full of things to be explained, full of mysteries and beauties that each one of us must hunt out and solve mostly alone.

In reading one of the late Bishop Quayle's books, I came across a sentence where he said that such brain as he had was located in his heart, and that all roads, so far as he was concerned, led out of his heart.

And that's where hurts always lodge. A difference of opinion between two people amounts to nothing. It only serves to stimulate and broaden each. But when you send a poisoned arrow of bitterness or falseness into the heart of your friend,

you have caused a hurt that will leave its mark forever.

How very wonderful to arouse a thrill of love or beauty in the human heart! A man grows by something more than inches when he has done a kindness or makes this world a bigger, happier place for someone else.

The man who starts a law-suit, as a rule, carries a shrunken soul around with him. Fine beings are not in that business.

They say to count ten before you lose your temper, or you may say something you may regret. I would say to count ten a thousand times before uttering something that may leave a hurt in a heart.

✱ *THE SOUL OF THINGS* ✱

**M**OSTLY we see the trivial, the unimportant and the material. The path of the soul, as it flits its way through little by-ways toward a happy heaven, is much like the light that follows the comet, billions of miles away. Just its mysterious breath remains—like a memory that is fragrant.

I watched a great train dash by a little station one day. I stood and wondered—and thought. One man behind the throttle I thought. Few thinking of that man with his single soul. He—the whole soul of that mighty machine.

A tiny speck in the sky—an airplane—yes. No—a man! A soul, precious to a Creator all too little thought about by those below.

A bed of pansies, a rose garden, a group of glorious tulips, red and golden with the breath of dead leaves once colored upon the tree and fresh with the touch of dozens of rains. But most of all, God, trying to talk to people in His flower code.

A book. Cold type. Pages of thoughts drawn from hours and years of looking, watching, lonely meditation. A silent soul. Some man or woman groping for expression.

It's the soul of things that gives to life its precious color, its hope and its light.

Just remember the hard hands of the worker, the wrinkles that pain and forbearing have wrought. Then remember that it is the soul that really talks. The man is only outside.

Our bodies sleep at night—our souls are always awake!

✱ THE ARTISTIC LIFE ✱

I HAVE read much on art. I have listened much to those who spoke of the artist in this line and that. But I am always left in mystery. What is art? What is an artist?

Flaubert, a French writer, considered by the test of time and the opinion of very intelligent people, as a real artist, may be listened to as one speaking with authority. He says: "*The artist should be in his work like God in creation, invisible and all-powerful; he should be felt everywhere and seen nowhere.*"

Flaubert says much more along this line, but this one sentence is the easiest understood.

From this great man we are able to sense a little of what the artist is—a somebody, powerful, vital, moving, full of effect, dominating, yet silent and unseen, though felt.

The other evening I attended the theater and witnessed a play woven about a Biblical character. To me it seemed dull and meaningless. And the audience seemed to think as one in this respect. But as the curtain rose for the second act, so simply and superbly had the art of the scenic designer been done that the entire audience broke into spontaneous applause—before a word had been spoken by any actor.

Here was given a tribute to the genius of an artist. His work had been felt.

Some one has truly said that the problem of the artist is to conceal art. One thing is always evident in the consideration of art, and that is, that it is the most difficult thing in the world to define.

Even greatness may be an art.

A writer says of Woodrow Wilson that he spent 54 years in preparation for his life work, or perhaps we may best say, in working toward the culmination of his highest ideals for service to mankind. Then he took ten years to live—and three years in which to die!

But there is something in the very mention or thought of the name of this great man which inspires respect, admiration, and even idolatry. Not to the



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## JUST AMONG FRIENDS

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man himself who was but flesh and blood, "even as you and I," but to the artist in public service.

Behind all art is a divine surrender to purpose, and wound about it, in a manner as intricate as the weavings of the silk worm, there is a hidden story of sacrifice, privation, smothered love and a hungered heart.

### ✱ DREAMS ✱

A BOY writes to his father and asks: "Do you think that dreams can come true in your heart alone?"

And I write to that boy and say: "No, boy, dreams can come true far and wide outside the heart. They are born in the heart, warmed there, as a baby is warmed under a mother's heart, and then the world sees them in reality—in buildings, cities, states, inventions, great books, thrilling events, and in finer human beings."

Dreams are of the essence of stars. There is a great deal of mystery to every dream. And it is this substance which drives a man on and which clothes the dream, later to warm its life in great enterprises.

I have always liked the Goodnight saying plus "pleasant dreams." As though in darkness we rested and grew in strength, that light and life anew with the morning might bring us a colorful hope, a heart steeled for effort and a desire to be more useful than the day before.

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## JUST AMONG FRIENDS

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Where would we be if we couldn't, if we didn't dream?

As a boy, F. Hopkinson Smith used to play with a little boat in a tub. As a man he planted great light-houses on the rocky coasts of eastern America which have guided and led many a ship safely into port.

They laughed at Napoleon at his school on the island of Corsica. He was shy and quiet. But he wasn't shy and quiet when he led the armies of Europe. It was Hugo who said that God had to enter the arena in order to restore the world after the devastation of so restless a man.

Which goes to prove that dreams may be both good and bad.

### ✱ JUSTICE NOT PITY ✱

MANY times the impression is given that charity solves. As a matter of fact it solves nothing. Nor is it the answer to any social trouble.

Charity is but a medium of expression. And it is only as we get into the right interpretation of this medium that we may be truly said to give.

As Lowell once said that the gift without the giver is bare, so when any of us gives, unless we give consideration as to why people need help and charity, then we do an injustice even to them.

Woodrow Wilson once said that "*The first duty of law is to keep sound the society it serves.*"

If the hearts of the most unfortunate could only



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## JUST AMONG FRIENDS

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be tapped for a true expression, the universal voice would be for justice and not charity.

Charity always smacks of pity—and those who need charity and help most, do not need pity at all.

Justice is even higher than freedom—for in a state of freedom, there may be much injustice.

Injustice is mostly misunderstanding.

Why are people poor? Why do they need help? No matter what we do for such, it is practically mis-spent unless we see and understand back of mere material money.

Justice to all! A very big program—but entirely possible.

I recently read the life of Joseph Pulitzer. An absorbing story. Many letters from the great publisher were reproduced. And all through them, and his notes to his editors, was this admonition: "*Be fair. Always be fair.*"

And that's what we all want. Fairness, justice—not pity at all.

## ✧ SLEEP SWEETLY ✧

THE great thinkers and doers of the world have been sound sleepers.. There are exceptions, of course. Napoleon and Edison may be cited. But even these great thinkers and performers pay a tribute to sleep.

Napoleon could fall asleep in a few moments at almost any time he chose, and get from a brief nap the strength he needed to drive his restless brain and

body. Yet Napoleon died in middle life. This writer is of the opinion that he would have lived no longer had he not been exiled, for he had a hereditary ailment that tortured him daily to the last.

Edison probably gets more sleep to the ounce than any of the famous. Largely because he doesn't worry, and is able to sprinkle his sleep at will.

Balzac was a poor sleeper. He had the idea that sleep took away from the powers of a literary man. So he sat up late, drank strong coffee—and died long before his time. He even left his "Human Comedy" unfinished.

Voltaire lived to be past 90. He did his best work after he was 50. He was a fine sleeper and was moderate in all things, excepting his ideas. He threw them into the world as a machine gun pumps bullets—and his ideas went everywhere. Sleep preserved him to lasting fame.

Goethe was another long liver. He gave to sleep a large measure of his life, and in return was given beauty of expression, power, and a serene old age. Heine once stated that he looked like Jupiter.

The great bard of Avon always glorified sleep. "*Sleep that knits up the ravell'd sleeve of care.*"

You can't sleep with a pack of worries as pillows!

Dickens died before he reached the age of 60. Had he slept more, instead of prowling about London for the matchless sketches he has left the world, he might have lived longer to give us fruits of a riper hue, picked from the healthy trees of day. But there are but few Dickenses about, so we can forgive him his sacrifices of sleep.

The lesson all through history, however, is that sleep strengthens, rebuilds, nourishes the creative mind, and gives to character the best of its control and influence.

All things will work out for you, somehow, if you get your sleep—and get it sweetly!

✧ *RAG-BAG MINDS* ✧

I AM indebted for this title to a delightfully written little essay by James Agate, a new writer friend. I discovered him in a book that was underneath another one that I was looking for in a book shop.

Isn't it thrilling to find a new friend behind an old one?

Most of us remember the old rag-bag that our mothers had hung handy in some part of the house. Into it went every little bit of odds and ends that her economical mind and beauty loving soul could not throw away or destroy.

And so I think that in a secret corner, at least, of each one of our minds, hangs a rag-bag of some sort that catches up from our careless, flinging minds, odds and ends of thoughts, bits of song and story, sparks of adventure, couplets of poetry, tiny dashes of romance, and other what nots. Things that somehow have an intimate preciousness about them, and yet which in themselves, are quite useless. Something, out of which, we may sometime piece out something that has the resemblance of a whole, like a crazy quilt, perhaps.

At least we can go adreaming over these simple gatherings. And what a happy dream that would be if it were to wash out a troubled mind, or a discouraged hour, or add gusto to a dull day!

I have known many people who have stored in their minds a little about a multitude of things. Modestly I may confess to belonging to this group. And I rather think that such folks are vastly more interesting and happy than those who know a great deal about but a few things.

So I would say: Keep the rag-bag in your mind. Keep putting something into it every day. But, if humanly possible, do try to select from that bag, from time to time, enough of its odds and ends, its curlicues and frills, to make something out of, that stands apart definitely individual and useful—something that you can give away.

✱ *DARE TO CHANGE* ✱

“THE wisest and stupidest of men,” said Confucius, “never change.”

The people who do the thinking, the planning and the real work of the world are the in-betweens, the great middle folks, who keep moving, who do not stand still, who have no time for boast, and who pull the load.

Most of us are the in-betweens. And not to fit into the scheme and do our day's work cheerfully is to brush aside our chance for happiness, which comes alone through service.

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## JUST AMONG FRIENDS

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We must keep changing all the time. Our thoughts, our viewpoints, our characters. No one can stand still and thrive. Should the running river stop it would become a mere stagnant body, perhaps soon to dry up and vanish.

If you do not improve your mind by feeding it day by day, it too becomes stagnant. The reading of books that stimulate and inspire, as well as instruct, and the contact with minds that are alert and broad help to keep your mind healthy.

The man who knows it all is useless for he has nothing to look forward to, and the stupid person is so engrossed in his own affairs that the crowd easily brushes him aside.

Never be afraid to change your front. Sometimes it takes super courage. Sometimes you have to rearrange your entire life. Sometimes you have to sweep from your path a veritable crowd of those who merely hang on for what they can get from you, wasters of your time and strength. Even this is a difficult thing for the generous hearted one to do.

If your mind would grow, you cannot afford even to be too consistent, for consistency all too often sinks the mind into a mire from which it sometimes is unable to arise.

Characters are blasted!

From storm to sunshine is but a little way—but how the atmosphere is changed. And how it charges the heart with zest, how it waters the garden of one's faith.

THE WRITER AND HIS HIRE

ROBERT BURNS, the Scottish poet, bubbled his heart into song, sweetness and beauty.

I cannot think of Burns as a very good worker in the field. He would want to stop too many times to note a scampering mouse, or to catch the song of some bird, or to pen a new inspiration to some distant maid. Something like the following, for instance, written to his sweetheart Chloris (Jane Lorimer):

*"My Chloris, mark how green the groves,  
The Primrose banks how fair;  
The Balmy gates awake the flowers  
And wave thy flaxen hair:*

*"These wild-wood flowers I've pu'd to deck  
That spotless breast o' Thine:  
The Courtier's gems may witness love,  
But 'tis na love like mine."*

I witnessed the sale at auction of this poem in the original writing of Burns, for \$7800. It was quoted in a letter by Burns to Mrs. Dunlap of London, together with another letter written to Roscoe, the historian. It was at the time of writing this letter that Burns had sold a collection of his poems to a London publisher and received for payment "*a shawl, a picture, and five pounds.*"

At this same sale I witnessed the buying of the first edition of "*The Workers in The Dawn,*" by



George Gissing for \$1550. And Gissing when he wrote this book was so poor that he could only raise enough money to have 277 copies printed! Later he came to Chicago and had to live on peanuts to keep him going, while he wrote a few short stories for *The Chicago Tribune*, receiving about \$10 each for them.

Even so recent a writer as Joseph Conrad died comparatively poor, though a copy of the rare 1913 edition of his "*Chance*" was sold at this same sale for \$2300. And a simple little letter to Conrad, from his friend Stephen Crane was bought for \$135. I smiled at this last, when I remembered that Crane received but \$100 from his London publishers for the printing of his masterpiece, "*The Red Badge of Courage*."

I smiled a stranger smile as I walked to my home, after this interesting evening experience and thought of the \$25,000, and \$50,000 salaries paid to American newspaper comic artists.

What a long time it takes the world to realize that the writer is worthy of his hire!

✻ THE JOY ✻

NO matter how well we may think we have discovered the secret of aspiration, or its urge, there will always remain, locked tightly in the human heart—in the most secret chamber of that heart—that something which no word of poet or writer has ever been able to explain—that substance, if such it

may be called, that explains the joy which keeps men and women strivers.

Stevenson hints of this in his sketch, "The Lantern Bearers." He says: "And the true realism, always and everywhere, is that of the poets: to find out where joy resides, and give it a voice far beyond singing. For to miss the joy is to miss all. In the joy of the actors lies the sense of any action."

We must be our own translators of life. No hired "pony" can do.

An artist must lace his own shoes, arrange his own tie, and select his own headgear. You can't direct feeling nor can you breed personality. Like Hebe, this joy that lives so rare, deep in a man's soul, must spring from a pearl lined shell. It's all mystery. But its rays may be seen from the face and through the deeds of a man as plainly as the rays of the sun streaming across a garden.

Strange that we search so far and long for this joy when so often it lies within us and we are carrying it far and near, not knowing!

Perhaps it comes from the touch of a hand, a favored and much beloved book, some exquisite etching from the hand of a master, or perhaps just the idle breath of a flower upon the desert—or the running song from the throat of a bird at sunrise outside one's window.

To pass a tree and just say—"A tree"—that is not enough. The joy is in every movement from the seed or root to the scampering sap and the fall of colors at autumn time.

After you have done the deed, which was an im-



pulse, then comes the joy. You know not why. You didn't study it out. You had no formula.

Just something let loose, that nobody knew was hidden in that deep place under your heart, perhaps, but you know the joy even though you can't explain. You have to become God to tell it.

✧ ON TRUSTING YOURSELF ✧

HOW very often we discover upon looking around that we have been deserted, friends have gone their way, the crowd has separated, the banquet is over, the final curtain to the play has dropped, the game is at an end.

Sooner or later it comes to pass that we must be housed in sturdy stuff to stand the shock and strain of retreating friends, melted fortunes, and shattered faith.

To "*trust yourself when all men doubt you*" and to bear in patience and silent fortitude, the tests of time, this is not easy. But it is always necessary if you care to hold the ground upon which you stand.

Many a leader has arrived at the point where he had to fall back entirely upon himself as the bulwark for all his dreams, all his ideals, and all his most precious plans for achievement. And often must he reconstruct his citadel there—and often rebuild anew—alone.

In reading the life of Woodrow Wilson, by Ray Stannard Baker, one is impressed with the vital fact that here was a man who was all his life preparing

for the Presidency—or some tremendously important leadership.

And when at the last Wilson's body became, as he expressed it himself, "*just a piece of broken machinery*," still did that fire of holy enthusiasm for a united world burn steadily and strong, though he died one of the loneliest men in history.

Long after the bulk of the writings of Woodrow Wilson have been forgotten, there will still remain fresh and inspiring as ever his little masterpiece, "When A Man Comes To Himself." A little book full of golden grain.

If you ever come to mistrust yourself, then for you the battle is lost! It often takes an entire lifetime just to learn the little lesson of "Never Mind." After that, somehow or other, everything takes care of itself.

✱ LITTLE ENOUGH ✱

IT IS only when the brave and simple nobility of some unheard of one shames us that we come to realize how really unimportant and small we are.

No matter how hard we try to be somebody or to do something worth while, it is little enough.

We shuffle too much through this life.

Ideals do not always have the gold rays of the sun upon them. Often they are darkened by the clouds of a storm. But it is our faith—that comes

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## JUST AMONG FRIENDS

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from somewhere—that leads us always and eventually into the light again.

No matter how much we do for others, no matter how earnestly we try to make this world a little happier, it is little enough.

We can never be too kind, never do too much to make the way of some one else less difficult, never give too much of love.

The world is full of cravers. The hunger of the heart, of the soul, is a far nobler hunger than ever that of the body.

When the rain falls and the winds blow, adding gloom and loneliness, it is little enough to go out of your way to do something that will put a light into the window of a life darkened by discouragement and loss.

How just a little bunch of white daisies changes all!

### ✻ NANCY HANKS ✻

A NATION can only be called great as it lives in a state of honest and reverent appreciation toward that which gave birth to its ideals and its life.

Men and women make a nation great. But without the women, there would be no men. So, after all, Motherhood is the keystone upon which rests the greatness of the world.

Women, not only give of themselves through motherhood, but they carry on through their constant and eternal inspiration all that is good and noble in the life of the manhood of the world.

No man ever does a great thing without the influence of some woman, be that woman mother, wife, sweetheart, sister or friend.

But, so often, greatness—passing by—fails of recognition.

Lowell called Abraham Lincoln "the first American." Then why, in ordinary logic, should not Nancy Hanks, mother of Lincoln, be called the first Mother of America, as typical of all the mothers who have made America great? How lowly she herself was born. How long and late she labored with her hands and spent her heart and strength in building a boy who was to become the man who was to "belong to the ages."

The world, has done unusual honor to Lincoln—representative of justice, mercy and love. Highways, memorials, tablets, statues, have been placed all over the land he loved, to help people remember the beauty and strength of him. But the mother—Nancy Hanks! Why do so few know of her, to whom Lincoln himself once said that he owed all that he was or ever hoped to be?

How very few know that at the age of 35 this great and gentle mother was laid to rest in the woods of Indiana?

Abraham Lincoln couldn't consent to the shooting of boys who slept, even while on duty. Does anyone doubt that at such times the form and face of his own mother—Nancy Hanks—came to him, as when in pain, poverty and travail, she warmed his own heart and breathed into it the life-blood of immortality?

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## JUST AMONG FRIENDS

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### \* FLOWERS \*

WHenever I pass by a florist's shop I am always lifted in spirit. As though a long absent friend should suddenly accost me, grasp my hand, and smile a regular string of cheer into my soul.

Flowers must have taken a great deal of thought on the part of the great Creator, else He wouldn't have scattered this earth with such a variety of indescribably beautiful varieties. No matter where you go, you run into flowers that you have never heard of. Every different clime has its favorites. The arctic, the temperate zones, the tropics—all have their own flowers, suited best to their particular season and setting.

"Say it with Flowers" really goes farther and deeper than its four words. There is before me as I write a blue container filled with flowers—brilliant reds, golden yellows, lavenders, and blues. I could sit alone for hours and hold a conversation with each beautiful, silent little friend. And then I could arise and go to whatever task I might have in view, stronger, happier and with a cleaner heart.

Flowers are our greatest silent friends.

I have walked in hospitals and seen the tired and suffering patients comforted and renewed in strength from the flowers before them.

I like flowers on birthdays and at all anniversaries. They are beautiful and wonderful at all times

and occasions, but most of all they cheer when least expected.

Flowers and pictures should always be in the home.

Yes, I do believe that white hyacinths feed the soul. I believe that all flowers feed the soul. And these souls of ours get very hungry at times and they don't thrive very well on an irregular diet.

If you want to show your appreciation of your friend, send some flowers—and hide a little note of love and cheer somewhere near the heart of the bouquet you send.

✻ *SEARCH* ✻

**T**HE unhappy people are those who live in the humdrum of the days.

You rarely see an unhappy person who keeps busy and who keeps looking ahead and plans for the consummation of new enterprises and new ideas.

When Stanley went to the dark continent of Africa to search for Livingston, he undoubtedly went forward largely on faith. And that is what the searcher does. He feels, thinks, dreams, and gropes. But he is sustained by a high faith, an honest belief that there is something ahead that is worth searching for.

W. H. Hudson, the great naturalist, was always searching for new ideas about the birds and animals of the wild which he so much loved. He would spend hours and hours with a field glass studying



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## JUST AMONG FRIENDS

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and watching the ways and habits of the object of his interest.

And what a thrill he must have gotten! Hudson's great collection of books, written from notes made on the spot, are evidence of his love and beautiful interest in the dumb spirits of the out-of-doors.

If you search your own heart, or the hearts of others, for the best and most genuine in them, you are sure to grow in your inner life and you are sure to profit from the findings that gain from the study of others of like nature and desires.

Keep searching.

Every day make it a point to hunt out something new and thrilling. I pick up a new book and find a little gold mine of beautiful, interesting and healthy thoughts—thoughts that stir my imagination and stimulate my ambition.

This world is full of interesting people. Search them out. No matter where you live or what you do, there is always something undiscovered that will build you and make you happier.

### ✧ THE FURNISHED HEART ✧

IT isn't what you put into your home in furniture, but how you place that furniture, that makes it appear furnished.

Some of the most beautiful homes I have ever been in have been those that were furnished the simplest. It's taste and heart that makes a home.

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## JUST AMONG FRIENDS

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As Edgar A. Guest has so finely put it, "it takes a heap o' living to make a home."

It's just that way with a heart. People ought to have beautifully furnished hearts—not gaudy or expensive, but simple and restful.

There are those of my friends whom I love to be with because I know just how careful and painstaking they have been in furnishing their hearts. After you have been with them for a few moments you know that you are in the midst of peace and beauty. You at once feel, also, the scattered scent of those others who have delighted themselves in those chambers.

People who have furnished their homes with much of themselves like to have their friends come around. When you are left alone in such places you feel your host's presence.

Recently, I spent a night in such a home. My room was simply, though perfectly furnished. There was a large vase of flowers that the wife of my friend had gathered from the lovely garden, and vines of roses, and all manner of other flowers scented the air in the cool of the evening.

Many people would be much happier if they did but refurnish their hearts. And many people would be happier if they started inviting a different type of people to those hearts. For people so often help us to refurnish our hearts.

And a furnished heart—even though beautifully furnished—would be a very lonely heart without many people in it!





APPRECIATION



THE drink of the soul is appreciation.

Men strive for something. They very rarely ever stop to think out what that something is. They tease themselves into thinking that maybe it is money, social distinction, fame, business leadership, or artistic triumph. But men really strive for appreciation—the only thing that satisfies.

If your friend appreciates you, then you are warmed in your heart, you enter into the work of your day happy and content, glad of the opportunity of doing something.

I think it was Helen Hunt Jackson who once wrote: *"If you love me, tell me that you love me, the realm of silence is large enough beyond the grave."*

No task is too difficult, no day too long, no effort too tiring just so long as you know that there is going to be love and appreciation at the end of the trail.

People often wither in the heart. And in nearly every case it is from lack of appreciation.

Give flowers to the living. Praise the one who does something good and worthy—today. Smiles and tears may mingle alike in total misunderstanding beyond this life. The thing that we know is that love builds and buds and gives out fragrance all about it right here and now.

The gospel of joy is to give. And giving is in itself a gospel that is flavored with divinity.

You can't over express appreciation.

Greatness all too often falls, like ripened fruit to the ground, unnoticed and unappreciated for all its growth and richness.

You are rich if you are appreciated. You are richer if you express your appreciation of the richness in others.

✱ *THE HARD JOBS* ✱

**D**R. JOHN H. KELLOGG, the noted Battle Creek Sanitarium man, once said that he early decided to do the hard jobs first. He felt that by so doing he placed himself in the position of being able to do all jobs when they needed to be done.

Today Dr. Kellogg's institution draws men and women, needing physical repair, from all corners of the globe.

There is something very stimulating about attempting the difficult thing first—doing what your friends say you are incapable of doing—just to increase belief in you all around.

The late Frank Munsey came to New York with but forty dollars as capital with which to found a publishing business. He left a fortune of forty millions!

The inspiring thing about the life of Frank Munsey was that he loved the hard jobs. He never asked a hard job of somebody else that he didn't know he could do himself.

Many of the difficult jobs of yesterday are now

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## JUST AMONG FRIENDS

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being done easily by machinery. The big jobs today are those of faith, moral courage, and will.

There is a greater demand for ideas than ever before. There are bigger problems to be solved and handled. A man must have greater vision for work today than at any previous period in history.

If you draw the hard jobs, congratulate yourself.

And, please God, do not whine or complain about the fortunate state of having been handed a hard job. Do the thing. After all, it's your job, your life that is going to benefit from its handling.

Opposition and calloused hands are great things to possess.

### ✻ NEIGHBORING ✻

I COULDN'T live long in a country without neighbors.

I wouldn't have to know them—at least right away. But I would want to know that they were there. Somebody near—that might understand when you wanted most.

Beauty and happiness rise like a warm flame from the heart because of the neighbor urge. Something that will keep touching or loving the hidden elements of our nature, making them to respond.

And so we see a flower, a floating cloud, a waving branch, a bird throwing out its joy in song. And so we feel the solid, beautiful rock that hugs the earth, the roots of the trees that so patiently hold their towering gifts of loveliness.

We walk through the winding paths of the wood, into the meadows, perhaps wading or fording the streams, and climb the hills, watch the sheep and cattle, listen to the winds—because we love so much to go neighboring.

What a thing to be a watcher in this world!

What a piece of divine machinery is this mind of ours—to see and feel and understand, to stand tests and be adamant in the face of devastating error. To be neighborly with other minds, whether of lesser or greater degree—just because the human in us all says to be this way.

In my silent library are my neighbors of all time and of the world—my books and my friends.

Each day you may go neighboring. With the winds, the blue clouds, the moving masses along the streets, in the halls of business buildings, on trains, in hotels—no matter where.

Who is my neighbor? Everybody. Everything.

✱ *THE EFFICIENT HEART* ✱

I HAD a friend who was in the hospital. The doctors looked him over and some, probably, scratched their heads and remarked to themselves: "H'm." And then, as by way of parenthesis: "Funny heart you have. Misses beats, or something!"

But one thing the doctors don't know about that heart. I have known it for sixteen years. It is always working for others. It bubbles up, it spreads

out, it reaches, it laughs, so that all who hear it, grow better. That heart is an efficient heart, no matter what the doctors say.

I would like to have everybody know Bruno Pascale, the boy with the efficient heart, who has worked by my side for all these years.

They told the great W. H. Hudson, when he was a boy that he had a "weak heart" and that he should be very careful, that he would probably not live any too long—but if he was on the lookout and used caution he "might" live into middle age. Hudson died at the ripe time when he was around 80 years! But, you see, he had another heart working for his weak physical heart—an efficient spiritual heart which warmed the entire world.

The efficient heart can look deep into other hearts and wash worries out there, it can lift the shades that have so long been drawn, it can teach patience, reveal love, and it can spread sunshine when the day is almost night with darkness.

There are men who make millions in money, who become powerful as leaders in politics, in literature, in the arts, and yet who die with poor, un-nourished hearts because they never learned the secret of making their hearts efficient for the large tasks of life.

A kinky spiritual heart is dangerous. It means that you are missing out on happiness and that all the health and wealth in the world cannot make up for inefficiency there.

It is very interesting and important to know

people, how to interest them, how to lead them, how to make them efficient in their everyday work, but it is of vaster import to understand hearts and know just how to make them happier. For people are happy only in their hearts, after all.

✱ *THROWING THINGS OUT* ✱

**K**AHIL GIBRAN says in one of his beautiful little essays: "He alone is great who turns the voice of the wind into a song made sweeter by his own loving."

In early youth the dream is that of accumulation and so often hoarding. But as life spreads out we get a new perspective. And it is perspective, after all, that gives to character its mellowness.

And this perspective is: You keep nothing—excepting as you give away. Like the flower which gives out its perfume but remains beautiful, silent, content—alone in its happiness.

I see pansies, red roses, forget-me-nots, violets, white hyacinths, and peach blossoms in folks' faces as I walk along the street. And these are the happy people. In other faces I see grooves where dollars have rolled down and fallen into the gutter—lost.

When I give flowers I like to add that lovely line which I found somewhere long ago: "The very flowers that bend and meet in sweetening others, grow more sweet."

When you do something to beautify someone else's experience, you beautify your own. The soft



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## JUST AMONG FRIENDS

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and pleasant shadow of that act falls across your path again. And these shadows as they accumulate, give striking contrasts to the gold of the sun as it creeps up to join hands with the shadows.

Sometimes we get very discouraged, and we reach out into the space of the world for a hand that we have known as soft and warm. And we find a place in its heart where our own fingers may be warmed and some silent message transmitted.

There is really only one disappointment—that of failure to receive appreciation.

### \* THE DESERT \*

FOR days I have ridden over the desert. For miles and miles and for hours and hours I have seen nothing but the barren breasts of tossed up earth and wide space, as far as the eye could see, just rolling earth with its sage brush and cactus.

But even in this vast space of desolateness there was beauty. Spots—and in these spots, I saw flowers of the most gorgeous coloring—blues, golds, cream whites, purples and reds. I wondered where all that loveliness came from. Who planted them way out there? Who watered them? Why should flowers bloom where people are not?

But, you see, the railroad came and then people—and now those flowers are loved and appreciated.

I saw little homes scattered across the barren miles on that desert. I saw trees about those homes. What brought those homes out there? How could



people stay so far from everything? But there is a strange fascination to the desert. Some day when that desert gets water, it will literally bloom with roses and there will be green fields instead of that vast stillness and voiceless nothing.

I watched the sunset on the desert. How the colors played about the distant hills and silent rolling mounds. Every once in a while the great distant mountains peaked up with their tops of snow streaked about their faces. It was a sight to inspire one beyond one's littleness and unimportance.

I thought of the time when the covered wagon first crossed those deserts, of the brave groups that left all to explore the lands beyond. I thought of the time when the buffalo ran wild and the Indians roamed those vast expanses. I thought of all that must have been done to get those great tracks across that now take dozens of trains a day back and forth.

Life gets very different after you have once seen the desert. A desert is a book of history. And only a part of that history has as yet been written.

### *O THOU, WHOE'ER THOU ART*

**I** SAW you on a rainbow one day, your thoughts dancing like the shifting colors of an Australian opal—now in simple sweetness, as the echo of a chord from the string of a harp touched by some loved hand, now in beautiful fragrance amongst the day dreams of a garden of flowers.

One morning, I walked out into the air intoxicated

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## JUST AMONG FRIENDS

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by a rising sun—and saw you waiting and watching in the heart of a drop of dew.

At another time, I sat for a rest on a log at the bend of a fence—for I was tired from the sweat of the field—and there in the tree, from the throat of a songster I heard you pour out your love—music that only the winds of the wild know about.

And as I awoke in my tent on the shores of a lovely lake, I heard you repeating a prayer that came to me thru the rustle of the green-dressed pines.

Across the breast of modest pansies, from the throats of lilies, intermixed with the gold of the buttercup, as the playmate of the blue-bell, buried in the grey mists that rise from the earth and bathe the bodies of the reaching hills and mountains, running in streams, dismembering and becoming the very ether thru which all the worlds and stars are made to move as travelers—O Thou, whoe'er Thou art, I wed my heart to you!

I see you in smiles. I know you in storms. I feel you in love. I know that you are around to direct when work is to be done. I have heard you in the laughter of a child!

O Thou, whoe'er Thou art, take this hand of mine, this thinking brain, this throbbing heart, this hidden soul, and make each a happy, willing, ready servant—to go, to do, to become, everything and all that you have planned and wished for them.

Refine, fashion all that I am, or am capable of being, O Thou, whoe'er Thou art.

✱ GREATNESS ✱

THE term greatness will always remain a strangely relative word. We speak of this great and that great, but we really do it all too often in flippant phrase. Greatness really cannot be confined to an expression. It has to be felt in a heartbeat.

The truly great often pass from the stage before we are aware that they were around. Like the great actor who doesn't appear to act.

In a little corner of Japan rests the ashes of a little man who thought and toiled and gave of his life-blood in the expression of beauty. He was born of an Irish father and a Greek mother and was early thrown upon relatives in England.

As a boy, this figure wandered about the cities of America. He slept in crude places and sometimes had little or nothing to eat. But he strove for beauty of expression and with great toil produced from the depths of his soul his feelings about things, people, instances that floated across this vaporous world of ours.

He migrated to Japan, married a Japanese woman, was the father of four children, taught with great sincerity in the University of Tokio and interpreted the Occident to the Orient. But he died a little past 50 just as his fame began to creep up from a grey horizon through a brilliant sunset.

Today Lafcadio Hearn is beginning to be loved as one of the great romantic figures of literature and

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## JUST AMONG FRIENDS

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in that far away Japan they are now sorry that they didn't appreciate him and honor him for all his worth while he lived.

But that is the way of greatness. The prophet dies. His fame follows.

Where are the flowers for the living who, in simplicity, breathe the breath of greatness?

Who are great? Not, surely those who talk about it. Probably those who never suspect it. Probably merely those who feel it, know it—and pass on—little honored, little noticed, until their dust nourishes the flowers that give bloom and beauty to Spring.

### ✻ I BELIEVE IN YOU ✻

**D**URING a New York Summer day Theodore Roosevelt and Robert E. Peary met. Peary was about to set out on the ship "*Roosevelt*" for his final dash to attain the North Pole.

Each man grasped the other's hand. Roosevelt looked into the eyes of the great and intrepid explorer and gave this as his final goodbye: "I believe in you, Peary."

April 6, 1909 the North Pole listened to the waving of the Stars and Stripes!

Many who visited the World's Fair in Chicago in the early nineties remember that famous picture: "Breaking Home Ties." There were the different members of the family, including the dog. But the face and figure of the Mother predominated in in-

terest. It silently uttered: "My boy, I believe in you."

You can walk around with a darkened heart. Tears may wash its walls. The lights may all be dimmed, and the wind and rain of the outer world may chill each one of its chambers. But if there can yet be heard within this divine creation of the great God just one echoing voice of faith and love from but a single one beloved and that voice saying but this "I believe in you," then nothing else matters.

All of us at times breathe with an instinct of heaven in our hearts.

Empires have been lost, states have been dissolved, cities have been deserted, and choice human beings have stumbled, starved in heart, and fallen in their tracks—all because there wasn't somebody around to say: "I believe in you!"

How cheap and gross is admiration, flattery, adulation, and mechanical applause beside this little touch of words imported from the stars: "I believe in you."

✻ *THE WORKMAN* ✻

**W**HEN I was a bare-foot boy, I used to love to stand and watch the village blacksmith at his forge. I watched him pound and pound and pound that red hot shoe until it had the exact shape and form.

I was greatly impressed. Here was a workman who took great pride, evidently, in his work.

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## JUST AMONG FRIENDS

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At the age of 20, Joseph Conrad could hardly compose an ordinary letter. At the age of 30, he was unknown and was just beginning to find himself as a writer of powerful sea stories. He shipped as an ordinary seaman—later becoming captain of his ship. But he never lost an opportunity to improve his style, and to educate his brain by the seeing of things. When he died, he was recognized as the greatest master of English expression.

I once read the story of three stone masons who were at work on a building when a man, passing by, asked them: "What do you make?"

The first mason replied: "Two dollars an hour."

The second mason said: "I am cutting stone blocks."

The third man answered: "I am building a cathedral!"

When I hear men talk about how much money they are making and the great things they are doing, I wonder what really is the big thing which they picture in their mind as worth while. I know one thing—I never pass a building under construction but what I think of the reply of that one workman: "I am building a cathedral!"



### THE STAR THAT FALLS



I HAVE often wondered about the star that falls from the heavens. Where does it go to? How long did it shine? How many people saw it in its nest in the sky? Will anybody miss it?



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## JUST AMONG FRIENDS

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I have an idea that there will be some people who will miss the fallen star—and that they will be sorry; the folks who study stars, who look at them through their powerful telescopes and who know the names of the visible stars. These people will miss any star that disappears.

And so it is with people who fall away from life, whose eyes close for the long rest—or awakening—in a sunnier clime.

And the people who most miss those who fall from activity, as the falling star, are those who loved and laughed with the one who went away.

The more useful and helpful you are to other people, the more you will be loved—and missed when you move away.

Like the star that sparkled for so long, you will leave a dark place, a place made vacant of laughter, love, cheer and inspiration.

All things that beautify this world are missed by someone, somehow. Even the flower that blooms and wilts, seemingly having wasted "its sweetness on the desert air," is missed. Its fragrance may have been carried half way round the globe. We never quite know from which direction beauty has come, or how.

The star smiled through the dark nights, like a diamond in a cluster of diamonds, so I am sure that the cluster missed it anyway.

We are in this world to contribute something to the well being of the world. Even though all we have to give is a smile, or a brave front, or perhaps just patience.



✻ DOUBT ✻

THE man never lived who didn't doubt.

And the greater a man's capacity for thought, for imagination, and for achievement, the deeper do these doubts dig with their roots.

So that one of the most sublime things in this world is doubt—because it precedes faith.

Put doubt in a man's mind and it won't take long for you to measure his caliber. All great men have doubted. They have had times when they fairly trembled because of indecision and doubt. But at such a time greatness broods.

Who can measure the anguish of a doubting man? Not the doubt of the cynic or of the boaster, but of him who honestly searches for the truth and who sincerely desires to contribute worth and service to others.

A Washington at Valley Forge, a Lee at Arlington, a Lincoln in the White House at Washington.

The story of human life is one of billions of doubts.

Even when we do something that seems to us very right, we are enveloped in doubts. We never seem to be quite sure, never quite strong enough to risk all or to believe all.

Our days are filled with wondering. Why didn't we do this? Why did we do that?

To go into the work of life with the spirit "to gain or lose it all" is a heroic thing to do. To strive

has its reward, perhaps not less than to have achieved.

No wonder that there is a Staying Hand in the world. Somebody, some special somebody, must be around to guide and point us ahead into the right road. Or else we would all be continually losing our way.

There is something more than beauty to that little prayer our mothers taught us so long ago :

*"Now I lay me down to sleep;  
I pray thee Lord my soul to keep.  
If I should die before I wake,  
I pray thee Lord my soul to take."*

✻ SON-TO-BE ✻

A FATHER's blood should be the best gift to his son.

This priceless legacy should be formed by that father when he himself is a boy. For the boy is much more than mere father to the man.

The office of father is that of God, pal, brother, friend, "good scout," play-mate, confidant to his son.

How shall he perform this great office and make use of this unusual opportunity?

First by starting to be this kind of a father at a time when he has all the dreams, the instincts, ambitions, and deep feelings of a boy.

As the boy begins to save his pennies by putting them in a bank, so should he begin to save his char-

acter, his clean heart, his noble impulses, his desires-to-be-fulfilled for his boy while he himself is clean and strong.

All polo ponies are thoroughbreds. They play the game with their riders. A father should lay out the cards for the game with his boy—long before that boy appears.

I think it was Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes who once said that a boy's education should be begun a thousand years before he was born. The son of this man now sits as one of the most honored Justices on the Supreme Court of the United States— at the age of over 80! And no finer gentleman and scholar has ever graced that exalted position.

Your son-to-be should have his first birth within your heart. While you are at your school books, while you wield the tennis racket, while you fight your way across the football field, and as you take your place among your pals during the activities of each one of your days.

There is no nobler success than to be a successful father. There are so few!

✻ *SOIL* ✻

**I** NEVER look at soil in any part of the country without beginning to speculate or dream about what it has hidden away in a thousand mysteries.

I see the budding flower and it thrills me—but when it is in full bloom with all its glory, I wonder

where it got its gorgeous colorings. I wonder how "just dirt" gave a garb so grand.

But nothing comes of the seed if it is merely dropped upon the ground. It must find its way deep into the soil and then sleep for quite a while. And then the awakening—to beauty and fragrance or to fruitfulness.

Your brain is soil. Your heart is soil. Your friend is what you have planted in the soil of his mind or heart. And it matters as to the beauty or greatness of that friendship. To have it beautiful and great you must plant deep. Then growth is sure to follow.

The stronger the tree, the deeper its roots. Roots must have moisture and a multitude of other things to make them bear their burden above.

Soil is so friendly to that which reaches into its inner secrets. It gives the minute that a seed or sprout asks.

The deeper you plant yourself into life, the greater you become. Life is joy, trouble, worry, thrills, fears, beauty, disappointment and fulfilment.

How typical the silent soil of the earth, which we tread every day, is of all that we are. What a rich, porous something is this personality of ours. Absorbing, giving out, enlarging, and sometimes so shrinking. Sometimes wanting other elements than what it has to make it give and produce growth. Like the soil.

Nothing grows in the soil that hasn't been put there. You can't take from life what you have not put into life.

✻ THE FOG ✻

THE other morning when I awoke, I wondered if morning had yet come. Just a gray tint filled my bed chamber.

I arose and looked out of my window. A dense fog bathed the out-of-doors. Exquisite beauty! The leafless trees nestled in a vapory lace that looked like a silken cushion suspended from the sky. I looked upon it all fascinated in a sort of stupefied wonder.

I could see in the midst a mere shadow that was faintly round but which gave to my senses the semblance of a ball—now pink, and then orange-like, only to change in a few minutes to a ripened peach. It was the morning sun trying to tell me Good Morning through the mist.

What mystery is enveloped in the fog.

I have always loved the early morning fogs as they have risen from their sleep and crept across the country pond or lake. Vast silence and a comforting beauty at the same time.

I begrudge the day of work on days when the fog comes. I want to get right into it and feel its heart. I want to taste its kisses upon my cheeks. I want to run over the hills with it and mingle with its phantom playmates.

The ships in the river or out upon the sea or the faint lines of distant buildings that are so delicately wrapped about by this strange phenomenon, whisper to my imagination and set it into a poem.

As I write, a Whistler reproduction hangs before me. A street in a fog. Buildings softened by these suspended clouds, men and women feeling their way to work.

And when the fog comes over the great town in which I work, I go to the window and dream in the face of the lighted windows, believing that I see a city set in the rarest of jewels.

✧ *NEW AND OLD BOOKS* ✧

**I**F I were to start furnishing a home I would start by buying a good book!

Then I would buy a chair in which I might sit and read that book. Then I would buy a bed in which I might rest my body and think over the last thoughts that that book of mine had inspired.

Then I would go to town and bother my head about something to feed this body, so that I might the better be able to work that I might have more books to add to my home.

Books are the history of mankind, its struggles and achievements, its thoughts and movements. How can anyone exist without books?

Surely books are what make us appreciate our human selves and the selves of the world.

I like to see new books come out. There can never be too many that are good and which really and honestly express people and their thoughts. But, somehow, I love old books.

I once came across a phrase in my daily reading



that is interesting. "*Whenever,*" said this writer, "*a new book comes out, read an old one.*" Disraeli once said that *he who did not make himself acquainted with the best thoughts of the greatest writers would one day be mortified to observe that his best thoughts were their indifferent ones.*

I know of a great New York physician who spends the last few minutes after a busy day in the operating room reading "The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire" by Gibbon.

Tennyson once said: "*I like large, still books.*"

I like the book that makes me feel I would like to have written it.

The first real store in any town should be a good bookstore. I hope the time will come when progressive towns and cities will own their own bookstores and have competent managers to select the finest and most helpful books for their citizens.

Libraries are splendid, but people should be taught to buy, to own, and LOVE books.

※ THE LESSON OF NIGHT ※

IF I were a poet I would write a poem to night—  
night with its stars and soft sky, its moon, its  
liquid music, carried by gentle winds, or rain drops,  
or dew.

I love to sit out under the sparkling canopy of the night and think of all the beautiful things that I have ever heard, or read, or seen. To think of those who have meant much to me in all the circumstances of



life. To plan, to dream, to toss thoughts to the here and the hereafter.

I would never teach a child to be afraid of the dark—the night. I would teach it to love everything that night holds within its heart.

It is at night-time that we wend our way to our home or place of rest and there gather the experiences of the day as we would gather flowers and place them where they may be near our home and add fragrance to the last hours of the day.

I have memories of an evening when I stood beside a wonderful lake and looked up at the moon in the midst of a cluster of stars. It was a tropic night with the mild and mellow winds of the heated day playing among the silken clouds that gathered in half circles like the players of an orchestra before an inspired leader.

To myself I said: "What a night!"

And how many times you have stood under a winter night's sky with the choice shadows from above playing softly on the white garments of the earth.

The night has a thousand eyes. And they sparkle as the eyes of youth with freshness, and with a glow that no diamond ever could show.

The lesson of the night is that of sweetness, beauty, comfort, love abiding, and of something that soothes when the heart is tired and full of longing, hunger and hope.

The day is for work, for activity and achievement—the night for rest, meditation and pleasant dreams.

✧ FOLLOWING MORNINGS ✧

RICHARD KING in one of his always delightful little essays, says that "*Life would be almost thrillingly livable were it not for its inevitable Following Mornings.*"

But what you do today is in essence what you will do on the following morning. We work and dream into our following mornings. We are always becoming—something better and something closer to our ideals when we want it that way.

Many a night we go to our bed discouraged and with a slow heart. But it is the caliber in us that smoothes out the dark shadows of the night before and brings with the morning and its sun or rain, the flower of something that has long slumbered in our consciousness and made possible the thing that looked dead and gone.

Caliber proves rules and men as well.

A human being should never be judged by something which you imagine about him. Looks, appearances, gossip, whisperings, these aren't true evidences, by which a man should be measured.

The following mornings of life are the headings of the main chapters of a man's life. They outline the meat and interest of the character portrayed. Many a man washes out his heart with tears at night.

It takes a thinking person to interpret the language of tears. When a man has passed through a fiery furnace there must needs be scars. And such

a man doesn't talk about them. They tell their silent story and others who pass by know that they have met and passed a man.

Cases of "nerves" grow rarer as a man or woman rises to meet his or her mornings after in better grace and unafraid to try another day.

We pass for what we are eventually, no matter what people think we are.

### *DESIRE FOR ACCOMPLISHMENT*

**E**NDURING success is the result of something fine and real that is born in the heart.

The making, saving, and investment of mere money is but a medium thru which success works. Dreams have to be clothed. Money helps to do this. But without the dream and the heaven-born desire for accomplishment, there would be no success.

I visited a beautiful home the other day. It was the dream of a young man who came out of college a dozen years ago. Now he is a man of great influence and power in his community, a man of ideals and a delightful friend and companion. He loves the thing which he has created—because it is a part of him. It's the story of his heart and the desire that was born there for achievement.

It has been this desire for accomplishment on the part of every man who has ever done anything, that has made a forward moving world.

It isn't enough to do your work well enough so that no one will criticize it. It should be so well

done that folks will stop to note, to commend and to wish a part in it themselves.

The desire for accomplishment which is always alive in the heart of every man with vision, is that which inspires betterment all along the line of work.

To think better, to live better, to work better—that is what makes a man better.

What a great spectacle—the man who builds!

Human life is liquid. Every noble thought or desire or thing done, in the end, flows thru the veins of all life, all history.

✻ *HIS ROMANCE* ✻

I ONCE received a very lovely letter from Don Herold, one of my dearest friends. And this was the first sentence: "My father, who has been my romance, died February 13th."

I knew just how he felt—excepting in my case it was my Mother who was my romance.

But a father—a romance! Something very unusual, though undeniably beautiful.

But why not? Can't there be romance in fathers? I knew the father of my friend in a small way. I can understand this romance. Every once in a while a father comes into his own.

The boy in the Bible story who grew tired of home and wanted to get a taste of the action of the world away from parental influence, also came to the conclusion that a father held romance, as well as

love, in his heart. And so he sought again that which he had a little while before rejected.

Who can look at the tender, wonderfully poignant picture of father and son in Forain's great etching entitled "The Return of the Prodigal Son," without being thrilled by the romance in the embrace of these two after so long a separation?

But the death of my friend's father did not end that beautiful romance. For years and years my friend will carry it on in his heart.

Every time I see my friend hereafter, I shall say to myself: "His father was his romance—and I shall love him all the more for it."

✧ *PEOPLE ARE LIKE BOOKS* ✧

I LOOKED into my friend's eyes and—read a long chapter, as though from the pages of a white paged book I had turned the leaves in silence and through my own eyes had absorbed something vital, poignant, true.

And then I read on—down the lines of the face, about the mouth, the curves of the cheek, the angle of the nose. Then I looked at the hands of my friend—another chapter. And the walk—page after page of character in the walk.

For people are really books. A book doesn't say: "Please read me." There it is. Take it or leave it. People are like that. Books, dramas, poems, histories, romances, tragedies.

Ask your friend to tell you about his life. Will

he? He will tell you the interesting things that touch toward his vanity, but he will not tell you the truth—it is too tragic for him and for any of us.

But you can read in your friend's silence, across the planes of his face and deep into his eyes and about the hands, things that he will not tell. It is well, for understanding comes from a linked sympathy that is true and sincere.

We take up a book and read it. We like it or we do not. If we like it, it is because the author breathed a part of himself into the pages and that breath touched you and warmed you.

When certain people touch, they warm us, and forever after we want them near. We go to them when we grow cold and lonely and want our thirst quenched.

There are books we read that leave us immediately because they gave us nothing of the soul of him who wrote. And there are people like this. When they have gone from our presence, they are forgotten because they gave, they left, nothing.

✻ *STILLNESS OF THE NIGHT* ✻

**I**T is very late. I get up from my typewriter and look out of the window. I see thousands of lights—the eyes of a city at night.

I see great buildings, apartment houses that seem in the distance to be massed like mountains, rising as they do, above the plains in the West. But in these long rows of heaved brick, stone, steel and



mortar, I get the feel of human aspiration, hope, disappointment, love, hunger, distress, blasted faith, peace, sordidness and beauty.

Sleep has closed the eyes of most of this throng of humans who but just a few hours before moved in masses along streets that were as arms reaching throughout the city's life.

What were the last thoughts of each one of these millions? What a book it would make if they could but be gathered and recorded! How troubled and worried the heads of so many as sleep gently drew the eyelids down and brought on rest and comfort and added just that much to the stillness of the night.

Only God is able to step softly into the bed chamber at the stillest hour of the night and fathom the human heart and its longings, its hurts and hopes.

Can you not guess the last thoughts of a mother?

The leaves of autumn have fallen. The bare limbs of the trees point to the stars. The occasional late home comers alone disturb the silent stillness of the night. The stress of the day has smoothed itself out. The tired body hugs its form to its bed, calls for sleep and hopes for pleasant dreams.

The eyes close. Always there is that longing and hunger for love and understanding. From millions of hearts it rises the same. And then perhaps there comes the touch of that Hand that closes the door.

The lights are lowered or extinguished, and only the beat of the life motor is heard by the Watcher.



✻ BEAUTY EVERYWHERE ✻

*"Diving and finding no pearl in the sea,  
Blame not the ocean, the fault is in thee."*

WHAT we think and see, we are. The really big and important man never blames anyone else for any of his misfortunes, never sees the bad in people to the loss of the good, and is forever giving credit for his success and happiness to someone else.

We have to reach down into ourselves for what we show the world. We cannot pass for what we are not. We can be samples of none others but ourselves.

What we reflect in beauty is in reality what we have seen and sipped from the overflowing bowl of beauty that is ever before all eyes and lips.

There are those who may win more than you and you may win more than others, but the test of all character lies in its capacity to absorb and express.

There is beauty everywhere. Even Helen Keller, who has never seen the lovely things that inhabit and color this earth, is always talking about the beautiful things in this world—in people and things. How much more we with eyes should love and appreciate them!

We owe this world and other people much more than is owing us.

Just think of the thoughts in the mind of the diver who leaves his boat and drops to the bottom of the

sea in search of pearls. And when he gets them, how he loves them, even though he may sell them for gain. And if he fails in finding his pearls, can't you see that he is a bigger man for his search for beauty?

Every tender touch of love or appreciation from one friend to another is an expansion of the lovely heart that never closes its eyes to beauty, whether in a flower or a human being.

✻ BELONGINGS ✻

EPICETUS gives us the thought that "true education lies in learning to distinguish what is ours from what does not belong to us."

But this world is too full of people who think that anything belongs to them that they can lay their hands upon and get away with.

As a matter of fact, nothing belongs to anyone that one doesn't earn—or deserve. Or, I might add—appreciate.

All other possession is just plain or polite thievery!

He who thinks that the money he has will buy him anything, is already a bandit in his heart. Rich people are those who own cities, rivers, entire mountain ranges, winding roads, forests filled with singing birds and roaming beasts of the wild, sunsets, and nights made full of the gold of heaven and the diamonds of the rich, distant blue.

In a novel by Robert Nathan, called "Autumn,"

there are many beautiful thoughts. Here is one: "Let the young be free to build a new world. It will be happier than ours. It will be a world of love and candor. Perhaps it will be also a world of poverty. That would not do any harm."

Poverty doesn't do anywhere near as much harm as the thought of it. I am speaking of intelligent poverty. Not of the poverty of the slums or of the turn of fate or fortune that leaves a human being at the mercy of injustice.

The only wealth that you may keep is that which you lay aside in your heart—and that which you store in other hearts that are worthy of your gifts.

### THE THOROUGHBRED MAN

IT is too bad that more time and effort is being expended in this world toward the breeding of horses, for instance, where a fine specimen is wanted, than in the breeding of men.

And yet, regardless of this fact, there are found many thoroughbred men, that for some reason or other stand out as fine and noble examples of what the Creator meant by a man.

Good blood always tells. It tells in a horse and the horse expert instantly recognizes it.

The thoroughbred has reserve powers. He goes the route when he is called upon. He isn't yellow. They tell me that as far as the thoroughbred race horse is concerned, its rider has everything to do in the race, for if he is in sympathy with his horse,

horse and rider are as one. Each stresses his will to win.

The thoroughbred man never stoops to cheapness. He never returns insult for insult. He returns silence for hurts, and is too big to lower his ideals for gain. If he is in a political campaign, he lets the other fellow throw the mud.

The thoroughbred is always noble in his dignity. But he is never a snob. Unto all men he is as he is, never parading under false colors, or borrowed clothes.

He never complains of his fate. He is never really defeated. He loses many times, but the call of Victory is always in his blood—always stirring his body to something beyond anything he has ever done.

The thoroughbred man is a thing apart in this world as much as the thoroughbred horse. But you don't have to point him out. Even the unintelligent has to stop and take a look at him as he passes by.

✻ *A BEAUTIFUL FACE* ✻

**I** SAT in a hotel lobby in New England just watching and studying folks. This was in Boston.

The people in Boston are interesting folks. They have Boston personality exactly as you will find that folks in San Francisco, or Dallas, Texas, also have a personality all their own.

Well, I sat watching the people come and go in this Boston hotel lobby. A chap sat in a big cush-

ioned chair smoking a cigarette. I wondered what he was thinking about. A strange little couple came in and looked around and then met some friends and they kissed all around. A Japanese traveler rushed in with his camera across his shoulder and a handful of grips. A young girl sat reading a novel. Men stood at the news-stand throwing dice for cigars. The manager of the hotel walked across the lobby and gave orders to have the front door closed. People kept lining up to register for the night.

All very ordinary—quite the same as in any hotel any day. But all of a sudden an elderly lady supported by a younger woman walked into the hotel. The elderly lady had one of the most unusual smiles on her face of any I had ever seen. I can still see it, so vividly did it impress its beauty upon my brain.

It wasn't just a smile. It was a face radiant, in full beauty-bloom. You could feel the magnetism of the personality behind that beautiful face.

All the rest of the evening, and far into the night, before sleep came, did I feel the influence of that lovely face.

I saw youthful faces of young women pass all evening. Many were very good to look at. But beyond the passing beauty, nothing remained. Here, however, was an elderly lady whose wonderful face remains as something real and vital, months after I saw it.

It was the face of a mother. The face of one who had undoubtedly suffered deeply. But I noticed that there was a peculiar silence of reverence as the face passed by. Such a beautiful face!

☞ THE PILOT ☛

I HAVE stood for hours on the bridge of a big boat and watched the man at the wheel guide his ship. I have seen him look ahead, then glance at his instruments, then turn his wheel. But all the time looking ahead—looking ahead.

Far below, innumerable human beings doing this and that. Pleasure. Jollity. Amusement. But out there in the open, whether during the clear, blue night with its stars, or with the roll of the waves or the beating of the storm in its rage, there he stands,—the lookout, the Pilot.

We go to our beds but the Pilot stays awake—looking ahead.

Each of us, in our lives, has a Pilot. And sometimes it gets very dark. We wonder if we are lost. We crave companionship—just to steady us a little, just to reassure us. And then something within us tells us that the Pilot is up there on the bridge, that he understands his instruments and his course. And we aren't afraid any more.

Perhaps, sometimes this Pilot is a mystic love, hidden away in our heart, to keep the little craft in which we sail, steady and clean until our faith is big enough to ride any storm, when it may appear to us in some real form.

Anyway, we know that we are voyaging and that a happy port can only be reached by a hand that guides through love.

Just a passenger, that's all. But the Pilot under-



stands. His eyes are always set ahead. He doesn't complain. He will be the last to leave his post in time of danger.

If it wasn't for this invisible Pilot of ours, we couldn't sleep at night. We couldn't face the day with courage and a brave front.

*"For tho' from out our bourne of  
Time and Place  
The flood may bear me far,  
I hope to see my Pilot face to face  
When I have crossed the bar."*

### LITTLE TUMBLE-INS OF TIME

**T**HIRTY minutes a day given to conversation with a worthwhile person, or an equal time devoted to the reading of a worthwhile book, if persisted in over a term of years, will make any man or woman an educated person—provided that person has acquired the ability to think.

These little tumble-ins of time, let us call them, may mean the turning point in such a person's life.

New viewpoints are what make us what we finally become in our mind life.

I know many a man who has gone through college who is far from being an educated man. A man may have a very large library of the finest books, but if he has never lived in them and strolled across their acres, he is nothing but their stranger—no different



than the ignorant passerby who knows nothing of his hoarded treasures.

No matter what we do, we cannot with profit to ourselves, give all our time to any one thing and remain anything but a machine.

We must salt and pepper our days with the many little tumble-ins of time by making them serve as refreshments for us, revivers of tired spirits, and as balms for hurts that all too often tell us of this misunderstanding world.

The worst possible use you can make of these little tumble-ins of time is to give them over to self-pity and idle brooding. If at such a time you can gather yourself to say, with sincerity, "I have a heart for any fate," I believe it quite possible that a "troop of beautiful, tall angels" may instantly be your escort across the street to the sunny side!

✱ *PUBLIC OPINION* ✱

SAMUEL BUTLER once made up a book which was called his "Note Book." In it he jotted down any thought that came to him. These notations probably comprise the most unusual and originally expressed ideas and thoughts ever put together. Here is one on "Public Opinion."

"The public buys its opinons as it buys its meat, or takes in its milk, on the principle that it is cheaper to do this than to keep a cow. So it is, but the milk is more likely to be watered."

Public opinion is a strange commodity. It is sup-

posed to be the composite expression of all the people, or rather what this mass of people believe or think. But this isn't true. As a rule, public opinion is merely the shadow of what the mass of people think they believe.

The crowd usually follows the outlined expression of a few who are able enough to make them think or believe that all are of the same opinion. And so the world jogs merrily along.

Most people go through their days on borrowed, or madeover ideas and opinions. They accept without thinking.

The real thinkers in the world are in a paltry minority and always will be.

If each of us thought for himself, and did this honestly, the whole groundwork of society would be wrecked over night! For the first thing we would do would be to dump the rubbish inherited from the ages.

Samuel Butler was a very good man. He was kind and generous and let people take advantage of his good nature. But he kept right on jotting down the actual things he thought, as he thought them. He was a very great man. William Lyon Phelps and "Bob" Davis say that his book "The Way Of All Flesh," is the greatest written in a hundred years. I have read the book and quite agree, though I am not a very good judge, having read so few novels during the last hundred years.

But when you have read Butler you feel like saying a few things—and writing them down—that you have stored in your mind for a long time.

✻ DOGS AND BABIES ✻

**D**OGS and babies are great assets in this world. They form at least two modes of amusement that never go out of style and which people rather like you for enjoying.

A man may roll on the floor with a baby, stand on his head and crawl on all fours, as when a boy, and the watchers look upon him as a human hero and a man of parts—a spectacle worthy of adulation.

It's the same with a dog. A man can be a regular fool in action with a dog and people admire him for it. Even the dog loves it all and will romp and do tricks and make a fool of himself to please his master. You can pinch his tail, box his ears, and play hide-and-seek with him for hours and he will return in kind. Sometimes he will apparently get very ferocious and make you think that he is going to eat you—but it's all in fun.

I once read of a man who fell into the Hudson river in New York City, and his dog swam out and rescued him. It wasn't play-time that day—but hero day.

A man may lose the last friend he has on this earth—but if he owns a dog, that dog will remain faithful to the end. He will never scold, never complain, and never betray.

Before me is a little etching of a child in a chair. Tears are streaming down its soft, velvety cheeks. Before its feet is a broken doll. Motherhood has

been cheated. Tragedy has come into the heart of a child world. I look at this small print every day. I am now grown, but I carry the same heart that was carried when I, too, played with rag dolls. Only the heart has grown some and is fuller of hurts and there are scars all over. But it is still intact.

We need dogs and babies to keep youth in our veins and to keep us tender by allowing us to act foolish every once in a while.

✧ *FRAGRANCE OF SPIRIT* ✧

THERE is as distinct an aroma about a life as there is about a rose, or a violet, or a pansy.

I have never known a human being with high instincts who ever tired of either the beauty or the sweet, delicate fragrance of these flowers.

People are that way. Those we tire of are those who give out nothing that we want to carry away with us.

But the other kind—we miss them when they are away from us, and we carry the fragrance of their spirit along with us wherever we go, no matter how many miles there be that separate.

The sympathetic and emotional life is full of disappointments. It gives out so much that has to float around in the world for so long before it is taken up by a kindred soul who is able to appreciate and understand. But it is the only worth-while life, after all. How cold and isolated mere intellectual grandeur beside that of a warm, bubbling heart!

No matter what we possess, we own it for but a time. It really never becomes our property until we have learned the secret of giving it out to others.

A stranger came to a home where I was a guest recently. In this home were three little children, lively, bouncing folks. They eyed the stranger for a moment and then rushed for him, taking him by storm. And how he loved it! The mother said that this was unusual for them to do, that they did not make friends quickly with a new comer. But children have instincts and they are not ashamed to advertise the fact. They know worth and gentleness and genuineness. And these things have a fragrance.

You know the character of a person almost as soon as you have approached and talked with that person. There is something, somehow, that isn't uttered, but just felt, just understood.

✻ *LARGE, STILL FOLKS* ✻

WHEN you look into people's eyes you may see whole volumes. You may see intelligence there, the warmth of affection or latent love, but greater than all else, that something, which, let us say, is understanding.

That is why with some you may sit for hours and without a spoken word, be intensely happy.

I like to think of such humans as large, still folks.

There are so many times in this life that we crave silence—but we want that silence very near to us in the form of someone who understands. So that

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## JUST AMONG FRIENDS

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every touch of beauty that passes, or every sorrow, or disappointment, or every joy, may find its reaction in large, still moments that knit us as one.

When worry comes, and confusion of heart, we all need the large, still folks about us. Or at least one.

You can never meet a problem by trying to drown it. You can't pass it to others and keep your self-respect. But you can go to your large, still friend and gain from him the poise and courage to lead you on.

The story is told of how Tennyson and Carlyle used to visit each other and sit an entire evening before the fire smoking their pipes without saying a word!

Large, still folks!

The masterful men of the world are the quiet ones. Free of all boast, kind, sympathetic and gentle—which presupposes great strength.

Walton, at the end of his most famous and beautiful book, puts this quotation:

*"Study to be quiet!"*



### CRUSHED HEARTS



**Y**EARS ago I came across a lovely poem that told of how a flower, crushed under foot by the careless passerby, made no complaint, but only gave back a more beautiful fragrance in return.

I once read the story of a blind man, who was at one time a noble Lord with great possessions. But



in the midst of misfortune, he became the prey of the evil, the calculating and the uncaring. Soon he was stripped of all he had—even to his great castle. But there was one who was faithful and loyal—a beautiful young woman who gave her all that she might minister to his wants. And together they roamed the country, bound and held by an everlasting love.

Not until the human heart has known sorrow and suffering and has gone hungry from sacrifice, can it know the beauty and gentleness of a living love.

The crushed heart is like the flower which gives back its greatest fragrance only after its beauty and unselfishness have been challenged through hurts.

Love is the eternal essence of character. It even outlives the man or woman, as the extract of the flower outlives the flower and is able to scent the air for years after its velvet color has become as dust.

I have sat for hours under a beautiful tree watching the early fall of the browned and reddened leaves. There I have thought of the buds that these dying leaves once resembled, all too short a time ago, and then I have thought of how these softly falling gifts of nature would soon be a part of the soil again—again to rise in richness in another spring and again add life and substance to the towering tree above me.

And so it is with the crushed heart. Its substance remains, a gift immortal, ready to give out again and again in richer worth and beauty. Mellowed, let us say, for greater giving.



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## JUST AMONG FRIENDS

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### ✻ WINDS ✻

I LIKE still nights best after it has rained, or snowed, or blown. I do not like still days and nights together.

I want winds to wash out the air that I breathe, to bring me messages from far away and long ago, and to touch my spirit with something of the farthermost parts of the earth.

Winds are so friendly. I think of all the great things they have touched, all the delicate perfumes they have gathered, all the voices they have mingled into their own, and all the notes of the birds from all points of the compass that they have accumulated in their flight and brought to me.

I have often heard birds sing their sweetest songs just before an approaching storm, when the winds blew about them. I wondered if they were not really trying out some notes that came silently across the distant miles, from other birds in other lands, on the wings of the winds.

I love to lie upon the sand near the ocean and close my eyes while the winds from across thousands of miles of sea and mist and rain, bathe my face. In this aroma I imagine the touch of a billion beds of flowers, and I feel the silent talk of valleys, and huge mountains, of fertile plains, and running rivers. And sometimes I feel the silent voices of those dearly beloved, as though returning over the waves of the wind, after many days.

Every night when there is a wind, I sit near the

end of my bed before closing my eyes in sleep, and listen to it as it dusts the leaves of the forest outside. I think of all the interesting places this wind has come from. And then, again, it's so soothing, this wind. Like the soft hand of the mother of your youth, pressing your hand or smoothing your brow as she tells you goodnight and "pleasant dreams."

How many times the cool winds have saved lives and great crops. What messengers of mercy, of love, and of music.

✱ *THE DESIRE TO POSSESS* ✱

**I**RIDE through the country. What do I see? Possessions. Big estates, farms, old trees that have weathered storms and sunshine alike and have sheltered and cheered generation after generation.

And in my newspaper I read a full page advertisement of a great and beautiful estate set in a country of hills, streams, lakes, and dreams. It was for sale!

There was a time when the owner of that estate longed for it and planned it all out, spending a good fortune in its accomplishment. But, somehow, it didn't satisfy. He no longer wants to possess it.

In a novel by a Spanish writer, Pio Baroja, called "The Lord of Labraz," I came across this statement put into the mouth of one of the characters: "You who live in cities are ruined by the desire to possess. You want to have a house of your own, a

wife, children; if you possessed nothing and desired nothing, you would be happy."

But who is happy in this wise?

We are a bundle of desires. But a large number of them are like the chaff—useful only as protective covering for those best desires which we reserve for the good of others.

Large possessions bring worry, envy on the part of others, and are apt to crush that which is finest in a man.

In the end, character alone remains as the bulwark of all that is worthwhile in life.

Health and love harbor more happiness in the heart of a man than anything else.

If you have much, give something of it away today lest tomorrow it be swept away and your opportunity for making someone else happy may be gone as well.

✱ THE DIGNITY OF LIFE ✱

WHEN Daniel Webster visited England, people looked at his noble and dignified figure as it passed along the streets—and thought that a god had come among them.

Emerson, at Webster's death, had this to say: "Nature had not in our days, or not since Napoleon, cut out such a masterpiece. He brought the strength of the savage into the height of culture. He was a man *in equilibrio*; a man within and without, the

strong and perfect body of the first ages, with the civility and thought of the last."

Webster aspired to be President of the United States and died a broken man in spirit because of this disappointment. But, in reality, he was bigger than any office and will continue to shed lustre across the pages of history because of his mighty intellect and his noble dignity.

When he was a boy, his father came to him and told him that he had put another mortgage on the old farm that he might go to Dartmouth. Webster went to bed and cried all night over this happiness and because of the thought of his father's sacrifice. Later in life he defended Dartmouth college in one of the most noted law cases in American history—and won.

Each of us is but one in billions, but it lies largely within ourselves as to whether we shall rise to a dignity great enough to be a master figure among these billions.

To do so means great personal sacrifice, days and nights of travail of heart and soul, and then a brave front that few, if any, may understand.

To the crowd, this dignity and suffering never look worth while at all. But every human being must either be of the crowd, or master in his own heart, of the crowd.

Without this dignity of mind and heart, a man or woman partakes of cheapness, and defeats the rising of all noble impulses that seek upper air and that open freedom which is impossible excepting as it is daily nurtured in a warm and responsive nature.

✻ 84 YEARS OF A MAN ✻

IN 1916 Rev. Stopford Brooke died in England at the age of 84.

John Drinkwater, in an interesting brief on his life says that his "qualities were of the very finest texture, and, had they been as little disturbed by conflicting elements, as by every chance of nature they ought to have been, he would not only have been the memorable and distinguished figure that he is, he would have been one of the greatest men of his age."

Years ago, when I started collecting the etchings of Alphonse Legros, every once in a while I would happen upon one from the "Collection of Rev. Stopford Brooke." These were always of the most original, striking and delicate sort. I soon began to want to know about this man whose love of beauty was so selective. It was not until recently that I came across the interesting essay by John Drinkwater.

Brooke was a tall, dark haired man of commanding presence. Whenever he was announced to speak the hall was crowded. He was an unusual thinker, and talker, direct, simple and magnetic.

His interests were broad. He was an unusually lovable man. Art, literature and people were his life. Tennyson, Browning, and the other stalwarts of his time were his close personal friends. Lawrence Pearsall Jacks, an English writer, recently

brought out two volumes of the *Life and Letters of Stopford Brooke*.

Toward the end of his long, useful life, Brooke wrote: "I used to see a great deal of the world, a host of folk, but I got tired, and other things that I went through isolated me, and now I find the social roads very dusty and wearying. I always desire the wild moors, and solitude is my meat and drink. There is a pompous, high-pitched sentence for you. Only, I am more morose, and life amuses me."

Now, when I look at the treasures of art that this man used to handle and love, I have a new and more understanding appreciation.

A man is in his life and character the things he loves and aspires toward.

✧ *UNDUSTED HEARTS* ✧

**D**UST talks in but one language—the language of neglect.

Whenever I see dust around I think of somebody who doesn't care. It is so easy to keep dust away. But somehow the easy things to do so often round out into the ones that are left undone.

Every day I meet people who treat their hearts as they do their furniture at home or their books or their desks at the office. They pay no attention to the dust that accumulates until they have a heart that doesn't seem new at all, just something ready for salvage or trade.

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## JUST AMONG FRIENDS

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It's the heart that moves our world, not the things we think and turn over in our brains.

We see beauty. And our hands reach out for it whether it be expressed by a flower, or some lovely creation of the brain of man; but to keep this beauty, it must pass to the heart and there take upon itself all the richness of that chamber of warmth and appreciation.

Just imagine walking into a heart and finding dust there!

Every time you do something that makes someone else happy, every time you explore some secret place of earth and find there something to stimulate and inspire you to better effort and service, every time you bring into being a generous act and forget it as your own, you dust your heart.

But when you fail to do something that you can and that you know you should do, every time you pass up a noble and stirring impulse to perform, you let the dust accumulate in your heart.

And dust always covers up so much beauty, so much that is genuine.

### ✻ BETTER THAN GOLD ✻

A TINY sphere of watery substance, moulded into an opaled drop of morning dew, awakening upon a blade of grass and beating its heart against the taps of silvered sunbeams, bringing to earth the breath of the Infinite God——

This is a picture better than Gold.



A child at play. A ragged doll. A sand heap. Tin pails, shovels, a cart. Gentle winds scenting the scattered smiles of childhood's dreams. Flowers, tossing their laughter through the light. "But her smile!—the little teeth like flower stamens in the perfumed blossom of her mouth."

To own such a scene is better than Gold.

The flowers of the field, so mystic in their meanings, their vaporous talk in a language that only flowers know, bursting their beauty through blushes into the silent air of the day and night, each single myriad colored coat a mute melody, like a hidden jewel.

These are better than Gold.

The blue of the sky after a summer rain, the sapphire of the sea, the silent star-drift of the milky way, the trickling tears from a repentant heart, the sweetened song of the bird softened by the loss of its mate, the spreading glory of the dying sun, floating clouds that play and fold their robes in warmth about the dreams of men and women. Crystals woven into winter snow.

Each and all—how much better than Gold!

Life, vibrant, full of hope. An appreciative spirit. An unselfish love. An unspoiled mind. A single love. Work, and a desire to serve. Not until we come to feel these things, as gifts from a source higher than any reach of ours, can we hover next to the great God, and say in our hearts of hearts that what we have is far——

Better than Gold.

✻      *EXTRAVAGANCE*      ✻

I AM not alarmed by my extravagant nature. And to those others (of which their name is legion) of like temperament or construction, I would render a word of cheer!

We all reach out into a vast world. That which we most desire is always far beyond us. And unless our reach exceeds our grasp, as Tennyson has suggested, what then is Heaven for?

This writer has every sympathy in the world for women who are extravagant in dress. In most cases it is but the means of expression of their love of beauty, their desire to enhance their own God-given personality, and their hope for appreciation, by a careless world, for that which is really beyond price.

My own pet extravagances centre upon art and books. I never expect to be wholly out of debt to the book sellers! (Hoping that no dealer ever sees this statement). I am comforted in this situation by the fact that no matter how wealthy a man becomes, if he is like minded, he passes through the same narrow, dark hallway of questioning.

Two of America's most powerful financiers were in Rome. They stood before an exquisite, old, and marvelously beautiful tapestry. Said James Stillman, as his eyes watered in appreciation of this work of art: "*I suppose I oughtn't—but it's a great temptation.*" Replied the great J. P. Morgan, gayly (unconsciously quoting Wilde): "*Always resist*

*everything, Stillman, except temptation!"* I am indebted to Anna Robeson Burr for this delightful illustration, which I came across in her book, "The Portrait of a Banker: James Stillman."

I am of the opinion that we can always afford to add to our worries if we add to our love of beauty and to our appreciation of it.

For when the dark days come, and the rain falls in cold torrents about our sad and lengthy hours, we can always go to our books and our art—to those silent and sequestered chambers where all is so peaceful and where warmth always radiates.

Whenever I sit about my books and open one that is particularly beloved and precious, I always feel that the God in me slyly creeps out and walks about silently in the room where I think and dream.

✻ INDIAN SUMMER ✻

PROBABLY no season of the year is so pregnant with serenity, beauty and mild color as is Indian Summer. Not too warm or cool—just moderate and peaceful.

Early falling of the leaves that have browned a little and sought the breast of Mother Earth; gentle winds that give a soft sound to the night air, after the sun has crept into its cot for the night—and then a full moon thrown in to emphasize the gold of it all!

What is so rare as a day of Indian Summer?

It's the hazy season when greys and shadows

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## JUST AMONG FRIENDS

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flounder among themselves. And now the late autumn flowers dance silently in their gypsy garbs and toss perfumery to the mellow mists that have arisen early that they might kiss the morning rays of the sun and thus try to outdo the diamonds in the dew.

Like late middle life is this Indian Summer with its ripe perspective and clear vision.

A time when meditation may be given to the past storms and disappointments of the spring and summer. A time when the heart sits before the bright burning logs of the open fire and sees in each flame something that has been given out that has warmed and brightened another heart.

Glorious Indian Summer!

The forerunner days—whispering of frosts and ripening pumpkins, of happy evenings, of cool nights sparkling with stars, of hope—perhaps long deferred—and of the good and able things of life that have stayed behind for so long. Like love, perhaps.

If you haven't a philosophy of life, then Indian Summer can't mean anything but just a spoken phrase to you.

### ✻ DIRT ✻

A FRIEND of mine took me to his country home. I slept in a house over 150 years old. My friend took me into one of the rooms and there played in a most expert manner an old organ. The music kissed the walls of that room as the tones of an old violin rebound in seasoned wood.

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## JUST AMONG FRIENDS

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But the entire visit seemed to centre about the aroma of the country itself. The giant trees so old, the meadow with its musical water falls, the little lake on the turn of the road in front of the house, the rolling acres that spread out from the small, white house that stood high on a hill.

It was raining when we arrived. The sun had gone. The lights of our car opened the way like a snow plow, brushing aside the darkness, as it does the deep snow of winter.

Everything was so quiet and peaceful, but it wasn't lonely. You don't get lonely when you are in communion with a person or with silent nature.

In the morning, the sky had cleared and the sun streamed into the windows and swept the wet grass of the fields and gave a silvery glisten to all nature. We breakfasted and then walked out into the garden and about the grounds. Everywhere was that so evident pungent smell of earth—dirt that intermixed with the beauty of the roses, made the green of the grass, and gave life and substance to the great trees.

On our way to the train I got to thinking of just plain dirt. There is nothing unclean about the dirt of the earth. Its elements give all the beauty of the earth.

The lilies of the field, the wild, strange flowers that people so infrequently see—that are "born to blush unseen," are all the children of this dirt. And all form the garment of the earth and warm the heart of Mother Earth herself.

No wonder people like to leave the city and get

back to dirt and to the soil. No wonder people love the smell of the fields and grow happy in meditation out where unselfishness breeds and peace blooms.

All wealth comes originally from the dirt. I like the phrase "dirt farmer." He is a noble product because he loves the thing he lives for.

✧ *THE CHILD'S LIFE* ✧

**W**HAT an interesting book would the life of a child be—that is, the daily, every movement, every thought life of the child.

We all notice the child at work and play and are attracted its way, but none of us really sees the life as it unfolds and develops. We just get it in spots.

The bubbling of the child heart is so natural. Its own world is the one and only world. Its broken doll is a sadder event in its life than the fall of a dynasty to other lives.

Nobody ever has or ever will write a real life of a child. For nobody understands it. But everybody loves the child, because it lives all the dreams, adventures, and journeyings that sieve through its active brain.

There is nothing so sincere as the working of the child mind. It is truth itself. And how easily is this mind effected and this child heart hurt.

Every once in a while you run into a grown person who still carries the child mind and heart around with him. If there were more people who did this, it would be a much different world. Gentleness, con-



sideration for the feelings of others, and a grateful appreciation for all services rendered by others, would blow away many a cloud from a dark day.

A child should never be taunted. It should be taught. And it should never be allowed to know what fear is.

Whenever I see a baby carriage cross the street, I see the picture of events, I see groups of happy well wishers, I see a mother whose heart is lighted with the choicest stars from heaven.

What confidence it gives a man to hold the soft, small hand of a child, to answer its urgent questions, and to feel the warmth of its faith!

✻ SACRIFICE ✻

SOMETIMES I think that this old virtue of sacrifice has lost its way in the world—you see it so rarely.

And yet, were the facts known, I believe they would show that there are more people in the world doing deeds for others and giving of themselves to their own material loss, than ever before.

For sacrifice doesn't show its face excepting as it shines and lights up everybody about its deed.

Woodberry, in his little book called "The Faith of an American," brings out the beautiful character of Wendell Phillips. In speaking of his home, he says: "A rich man's home, as wealth was then accounted in that community,—foregoing enjoyments, refinements, luxuries, natural to the master's birth



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## JUST AMONG FRIENDS

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and tastes, in order that the unfortunate might be less miserable, is the monument by which in my mind I remember him: a life of daily sacrifice."

If sacrifice is advertised, it loses its fragrance. Many are the beautiful flowers of manhood and womanhood which are born "to blush unseen" as well as to wilt unsung though their very presence in the world has made it far more beautiful.

It is natural for a mother to sacrifice, and under any protest you could draw nothing but a smile from her.

There is nothing that brings so much happiness to him who gives it as giving to make another happy through personal sacrifice to himself. That is his compensation.

The human heart is the richest mine in the world! It contains more than pure gold, more than the most precious of pearls or the most mystifying of stones from the silent breast of the earth.

You never know the greatness of life until you have sacrificed much for the pleasure and happiness of others.

## UNDER THE SILENT TREES

EVERY man and woman should, sometime during the year, visit the country and so forget everything else that they may commune anew with the silent forces of the wild.

Every year my friend, Chief Beckman, who conducts a camp on the shores of Lake Champlain, wel-

comes me for a little visit. He gives me his choicest tent right on the edge of the lake under thick, great pines.

I retire early. The ends of the tent are rolled up so that I lie with only a shelter above my head. The waters of the lake romp and play under the stars, and when there is a moon, each tiny wavelet tosses a smile to me as I feast upon the breath of the cool night.

One evening I went to my tent earlier than usual, for I was lonely. There it was that those beautiful lines by Amelia Welby came to me, and I give them to you:

*"The twilight hours like birds flew by  
So gently and so free,  
Ten thousand stars were in the sky,  
Ten thousand in the sea.*

*"For every wave with dimple cheek  
That leaped upon the air,  
Had caught a star in its embrace  
And held it, trembling there."*

Under the silent trees, when all is night about you, all the pride and conceit of a man seem dead. Just the simple God in one's heart remains.

I thought of those I loved most as I awaited sleep in my tent. I wished that I might just then have at least one moment in which to tell each of my love and appreciation. I thought of my mother who left

me so very long ago, but who seemed so near that she might have gone away just yesterday.

I meditated upon all my past failures and my little successes. I thought how futile mere money winning was and how fleeting the applause of the crowd. Only one thing in life seemed worthwhile and that was the bringing of happiness to others.

I think that the great open spaces and the thick woods and the mirrors of water that dot the land, really make us feel our smallness and spur us on to better and higher aims.

✻ *BREAKFAST* ✻

FAMOUS writers and philosophers have glorified the breakfast table. Why not? The world starts all over again at the breakfast table.

It's a sort of cabinet meeting for the soul and its cohorts.

For many years I went without my breakfast—but not by choice. Breakfast is really my *de luxe* meal—"be it ever so humble."

I have never been convinced that a hard day of toil with hands or brain is best begun on an empty stomach. To me, breakfast with a congenial group, a friend, or an acquaintance, is like a little run up to the gates of heaven for fresh air and inspiration.

There should always be a sincere jollity of heart at the breakfast table. There should be no hurry, no irritation, no complaining. If the postman brings the bills before breakfast they should remain un-

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## JUST AMONG FRIENDS

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opened until after that first hour of lightness and cheer.

Breakfast should be simple and not heavy. You can't think with too heavy a strain on the noble stomach.

Worry should be the one thing that should have no place on the breakfast menu.

I shall never want my breakfast in bed so long as I am able to find my way to the breakfast table.

I remember spending the night at the home of a friend who has a big house and large grounds in the country. We had a delightful evening, but in the morning, shortly after I had awakened, there was a knock at the door and the butler entered with a tray and a steaming breakfast. But, oh, the disappointment! I was to miss the touch of friendship and interchange of talk with my friends. Even the sunbeams that streamed through the large windows looked disappointed.

A large part of the fun and happiness of a guest is to meet him next morning at the breakfast table.

May breakfast never go out of date or grow old fashioned.

### \* WE TAKE A CRUISE \*

FORTUNE favors us when we least expect it. It favored this writer when a friend invited him to join a party for a little cruise into the waters of the Bahamas.

We were a party of six humans, a captain, mate,

and Japanese cook. Our boat a stocky, sturdily built affair, graceful and gay in lines. We were provisioned for a dozen days. A gayer group never left shore, and a happier lot never returned after such a cruise.

A bystander remarked as we left that it wasn't human to house such a party in a little boat, for a week or so, without some friction breaking loose now and then. But if just a little hadn't been possible, none of us would have thought we had been anything but ordinary. And none of us wanted to be ordinary. And so we weren't! We were ourselves and we were happy.

It was a boatload of good scouts. The sapphire waters of the good old Gulf Stream spat in playful mood upon the deck where we sat. Up, again and again, came that sporty bow—and down, again and again, it went. It skidded and it skated. It danced and it purred. It did tricks—and then hid its face while it laughed up its sleeve!

The *Hoosier* 6th had a royal heart.

By day and by night we lived. The tropic sun browned our bodies and the salt air of the sea cleaned out our minds. We were always hungry. We read, we napped, we swam, we roamed upon the sands of the shore. We met strange faces and learned a little of the lot of the lonely.

We fished. We did as we pleased. At night time our radio entertained us with the best from Los Angeles to Boston, from Havana to Chicago. We knew what was going on in the world. We were isolated and we weren't.

Consideration was always aboard. That always assures a successful cruise. Our cruise was eminently successful.

And when it was over this member of the party, at least, went back to his work with a picture of beauty to guide him on—happy in his heart.

✱ *TWO GIRLS* ✱

**F**OR four days I once entertained two young girls—the daughters of a dear friend of my boyhood days. They were four days of gold.

I dropped business where it stood! Why not? Is business, the making of money, the getting of a little fame, of much account after all?

I took 20 years and just dropped them into the wastebasket by my office desk—and walked out into the sunshine. I became a boy again. My young friends and I adventured here and there. We didn't mind time at all. What has time to do with happiness?

We shopped, we went to the country, we drove over marvelous routes that were steeped in tradition and history. We went to the movies and the theater, visited the grave of "an amiable child" buried by the side of a great avenue on the bank of a noted river, roamed through art museums, ate at odd and interesting restaurants, talked books and nonsense, laughed, told stories, and made ourselves generally happy.

But the beautiful thing about these girls was that

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## JUST AMONG FRIENDS

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they came from a little town in a mid-western state, were born of splendid, hard working and clean thinking parents, were educated in a fashionable Eastern school, and yet were as unspoiled as the pansies in a lovely garden.

These girls didn't think it smart to drink cocktails and smoke cigarettes. They simply didn't think along those lines at all. They grew up naturally and beautifully.

And so, when they came to town, of course we had time to play with them and give them of the little which we had.

They were appreciative girls, finely bred, clean in their thoughts and life.

And when they had gone, this life felt cleaner, happier, braver, better, sounder. God's world was much sweeter—life was much more possible.

## ON THE READING OF BOOKS

BOOKS, I believe, have influenced human thought beyond everything else. Books are really people talking. Not only the author, but his imagined characters.

No matter how much we may associate with people, time, after all, is very brief and we can meet and talk with but a comparative few. But we can have a thousand people in books and in imaginary characters right at our very finger tips as our friends. And we can choose each friend for each mood that is ours.



The reading of books is quite like reading all about a famous physical spectacle before seeing it. You put your mind in tune with what the author probably gathered after long years of observation and study. Then, as you go out into life again your sense of observation is quickened and you see things for the first time that you thought you had seen all your life.

The reading of books brings us nearer to people and to a better appraisal of all the values of this life.

The reading of biography is especially inspiring. If you know the men and women of a country, you already know much of the country itself.

In the proper mood, poetry is most soothing. Like walking through a garden of spring flowers. And then there is that uplifting style and type of poetry like Tennyson's "Ulysses" and Joaquin Miller's "Columbus."

Short essays are stimulating reading for a business man who wants to clear out the cobwebs in his brain at the end of the day. Charles Lamb's "Essays of Elia" are wonderful and if you are not too tired "Heroes and Hero Worship" by Carlyle. The latter was one of my earliest favorites.

Fiction in the shape of novels helps to give great elasticity to the mind. But good novels should be read—those that have withstood the test of time. I remember sitting up in my Pullman bed and in my hotel room, until nearly morning reading "Jane Eyre." One of the world's greatest books and a work of art written by a woman, Charlotte Bronte.

✱ *ON THE TRAIN* ✱

I DISLIKE traveling on a train, and yet I learn more about folks there than any other place, almost.

I sat in the diner of a train that was passing over the desert in Arizona. At the table in front were a mother and daughter. Each seemed to be trying to outdo the other in saying mean things. Neither had slept "because of the rough road-bed" and the food "must have been poisoned through and through," they hinted audibly. In those faces there didn't rest a single happy plane that I could see.

My waiter was all smiles and brought me the finest sample of a melon that I had ever eaten. I got to talking to him. He told me a dozen interesting things. He called my attention to the odd things about the country I was passing through. As he passed the couple spoken of he noted that the mother was not seated quite comfortably and offered to make her more comfortable—but she gave him such a look that the poor fellow fled to the kitchen.

People on the train throw things about in a way that they wouldn't think of doing in their own homes. They seem to think that the train belongs to them—some of them.

Consideration for others among passengers does not hold first place on a train, and yet there seems to be a uniform courtesy among the employees of most trains towards these passengers.

Too many travelers look upon a train journey as something to get over as soon as possible. And yet,

what a world of information one can get just by looking out of the window. Recently I learned the names of a dozen new flowers as they smiled in color and beauty on the hills alongside the train as it whizzed by.

At a station where the train stopped I learned of the habits and ways of a bird that I had never heard of before.

A train is quite an educational institution after all!

### *ROAMERS OF THE FOREST*

**A**s human beings we do not understand each other very well. And yet it is a very simple process when a community of interest is established.

I often think of this in connection with our understanding of animals. Animals like human beings when they understand that they mean no harm to them. The dog and cat have long become companions of people.

I remember standing in a great park watching four little girls feed some ground hogs from their hands. The beautiful animals ran up and took their gifts in great glee. They had learned from long association with people who came into the park, and fed them, that these were friends of theirs.

How beautiful the deer is! In this same park I saw one leap through the woods and the sight gave me a great thrill. I thought how very wrong for an intelligent man to kill one of these beautiful animals. I hope the time will come when there will be no kill-

ing of the animals that roam the forests of the country. They give something to the wild—a personality.

I once watched a ground squirrel gather dry grass for his nest. He came within a few feet of me but seemed to have no fear. He was a part of my world and we were friends. I think he understood.

I spent a night in a camp deep in the woods. I had wide windows that let in the golden moon and stars and the cool air of the night. Morning opened its eyes early. I looked at my watch and saw that it was only five o'clock. I could hear the birds sing and their chatter was full of melody. It makes all the difference in the world to wake up in an atmosphere of song and the fragrance of the woods.

It seems too bad to take away the home of those who roam the forests. It is just as bad to take away the roamers themselves from the forests. I am glad that they are protected by law to some extent anyway in our beautiful Natural Parks.

✱ *ART IN THE HEART* ✱

THERE are many compensations for the losses in this life, and one of the greatest of these is what God planted in people's hearts in the way of appreciation for beauty.

One summer I traveled through the west. I saw the greatest and largest trees in the world—noble, majestic giants reaching toward the sky, inhabitants

before Christ walked about the earth, and old while human history was forming.

I am sorry that I didn't see the incomparable Redwoods of California when a boy. They form a great background to the thoughts of after life. Everything beautiful and stupendous does this.

I have seen hundreds of people go through all sorts of hardships in order to see the beauties of nature. It's because art is born in the heart, and the body will stand almost anything that its heart may be made glad.

Flowers! I have seen the simplest homes in far away communities a veritable garden. Roses by the hundreds and colors of every sort, like a gypsy's garment. What peace, I thought, to those who live in a little home surrounded by such inspiration and close contact with the soul of nature.

I have seen lovely flowers dotting portions of the desert and seen mountains that showed every tint of green, and I have seen the sea leap to touch the sturdy rocks that rose high along the Pacific Ocean, and at the fall of night I have seen the running colors of the lowering sun wrapping a mantle about the quieting waters, as though to tell them Good Night.

What would all these things mean if art wasn't born in the human heart?

Why do people want and crave beauty? I can give no other answer than that it is because art is as essential to this heart of ours as the other things that give life and health and aspiration.

Mountains, streams, winding roads, great trees, the sea, the floating clouds, the carefree birds, the wild and happy flowers, the valleys, the simple folk of the out-of-the-way places—there is art in them all.

### *THE SERVILITY OF IMITATION*

**I** CAN excuse about everything in a man who is himself and who doesn't make any boast.

I can learn more from such a man merely by just watching him than by listening for hours to him who has tried to pick up everything he could from others and then glue it to himself as though it were himself.

The fact is that there are very few original thinking and acting men. The world, somehow, won't let them be that way—but if the man is big enough, he acts himself anyway. And then the world just smiles because it can't help it, and both men and women hail this chap as a born genius!

Some great man once said that genius was the capacity for taking great pains. But I am of the opinion that genius is simply being yourself in spite of the world, the flesh and the devil!

I am sure that the most honest people in the world are those who act nearest to what they think is right and do nearest what to them seems the highest expression of themselves.

The servility of imitation breeds a most unwholesome spirit into the world. It makes weaklings of otherwise possibly great men.



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## JUST AMONG FRIENDS

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The pampered boy nearly always gets a "knock-out" in the first round of life's royal fist fight. But he who was early turned loose to "find out" and to take blow for blow, stays the contest out and is returned a winner.

You can't be the other fellow. Then why try to imitate him? Do something that he can't do. You have what no other human being has. The important thing is to find out for yourself just what that particular something is.

Be yourself. It's your life.

### ✻ *THEY WILL TALK ANYWAY* ✻

I SAW the subject of this talk cut into a wooden board that hung above the porch of The Roycroft Inn at East Aurora, New York, the famous Albert Hubbard place.

I thought of its true philosophy even though it did make me smile as I read it.

Yes, they will talk anyway—no matter how hard you try to do something worth while or very much out of the ordinary.

We all spend too much time worrying about what someone else is going to think about what we do, whereas every man and woman should endeavor to do the thing he or she thinks is best and the right thing to do.

They will talk anyway! Let them talk.

Just the minute that one tries to defend his action,



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## JUST AMONG FRIENDS

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he gets into trouble. Actions are either good or bad and results can only decide their merit.

The surest test for an action is found in how it makes you feel. Nobody feels good after having done anything that hurts someone else.

But we can't judge the actions of others. Because we are unable to delve into motives or to fathom them to their rootings.

To gossip is to spread poison. To talk about someone we know nothing about is to prostitute our intelligence.

Your own feelings are always an accurate gauge.

Mobs never rule. And the bystander isn't a just judge. If you believe a thing, stick it out. Ride your ideas to their journey's end. Never mind the comments.

They will talk anyway.

### ✧ INTIMATE THINGS ✧

IT is said that Alexander carried the "Iliad" with him on his expeditions in a precious casket.

I always carry more books with me on a journey than I expect to read. I want company. They are intimate things—and I love intimate things. In my left pocket I always carry a lovely little carved piece of ivory. It helps the lonesomeness many times!

In my library is a book that was given to Joseph Conrad "from his friend W. H. Hudson." A book that two great and fine souls had loved and handled.

Intimate things so often become inspiring things.

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## JUST AMONG FRIENDS

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There is hidden away in a safe place in one of my cabinets a small bronze of Frank Bacon, the actor who made "Lightnin'" loved around the world. It is signed by that beautiful soul, whom I so much loved. It is intimate and sacred to me.

It is fine that God put into the human heart a desire for intimate things.

Years ago I sent to "Fighting Bob" Evans a fine cartoon by a leading artist who had pictured this brave Commander's courage in a unique way on paper. He sent back a kind and appreciative letter and said: "It will give us something to cry over, long after criticism has died away."

Intimate things sweeten and add fragrance to life.

### SYMPATHY THROUGH UNDERSTANDING



NONE of us can hope to make the world better unless we understand it. And the only way to understand it is to live.

George Gissing wrote of the poor and unfortunate in the lower classes of London because he understood them. He lived with them though he was not of them. He knew every pang of poverty, of physical and mental suffering. So it was that he could write sympathetically.

No one who has not suffered the mental and physical pangs of hunger can have any idea of the appeal of a hungry man.

He who understands, asks no questions. He acts.

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## JUST AMONG FRIENDS

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Love's greatest passion springs from the fountain of understanding.

The courage of the heart is that of understanding. In great emergencies there is little talking done. Read of the disasters at sea. Invariably you will read of the order and calmness with which most of those on board conducted themselves. The physical has surrendered to the spiritual.

We receive warmth from the reading of a great book only as we are able to absorb the spirit of the author and all that he lived and felt as he wrote.

My friend knows that I love him, that I would rush to his side when needed, that I am of him a part—brother, partner, co-worker and helper. And he knows he has my backing and that I will stand for the things for which he stands just so long as he is right, though I shall not desert him when he is wrong.

When people understand each other they don't have to look up each other's actions in the dictionary to fathom meanings.

### ✧ THE AWAKENING ✧

THERE always comes a time, sooner or later, when a man comes intensely to himself. When he comes to see and to feel life as a very serious, though not unhappy affair.

It's something like the time when a boy yearns to throw away his short pants and put on the longer ones that typify the man. Or when the academic

school is over and the real school of hard and fast life begins in earnest. When bread and butter, honest sweat, and roughened hands typify the game we play that our dreams may come true.

I once talked with a man who held a very responsible position with a great manufacturing plant located in a big city. I knew this man when he was in his early twenties. He was a careless, rather reckless chap then. But the other day when I took dinner at his beautiful home and romped with his kiddies on the floor, and watched the tall, rather austere man take his seat at the table, I thought of a time that must have arrived when this friend must have come suddenly to himself.

Tomlinson, the English writer, brings this picture out in a most interesting and artistic manner in his story "The Master." The boy who was just a simple sailor to his former mates, but who later became master of his own ship.

The awakening! That time when a man becomes involved in a maze of questionings, is chilled by a thousand doubts, wonders at his incapacities, stumbles in his nights of darkness—only to find himself, to arise, feel his strength, test his faith, and move on toward his vision.

It's just before this time that "a feller needs a friend," if he ever does!

It is not strange that we meet so many of our friends of former days and almost immediately remark to ourselves: "How changed he is!"

If we are to breast life, we must come to an early appraisal. We must learn values.

✻ *JUST A FARMER* ✻

**M**Y friend and I were talking the other day. We talked of many things, but soon the conversation had to turn to the things we were both most interested in.

"I'm just a farmer," said my friend. "I love the out-of-doors."

I wonder what this world would be without its just-a-farmers?

I drove through a wonderful country on one of my vacations. I rode past miles and miles of fruit trees that had borne fruit for a quarter of a century. I thought of all that each orchard owner had gone through to bring this country to its magnificent state of richness.

The man who goes out into a wooded or barren land and clears and cultivates—works and waits—is something more than "just a farmer." He is a builder, a benefactor, one of God's choice friends.

To get down close to the earth, to feel its warmth, to feel its throb of hope through all the seasons, all the changes, all the discouragements, is to be blessed by Heaven. The city man gets little poetry out of his hot and cold pavements and money-moving crowds. But the country man lives a poem. He awakes with the song of the birds and he breathes into his nostrils air that is perfumed with the health giving elixir of every servant of nature.

There are no nobler workers in this world than—just the farmers.

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## JUST AMONG FRIENDS

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How I envy the farmer at springtime as he turns the dirt and hears the silver toned songs of the returned birds.

Somehow beauty hovers about the farmhouse, its individual buildings and work machinery, its team horses, its cows, pigs, sheep, hens—and the faithful dog.

A small part, at least, of every man's life should be spent upon the farm, or in farming. It helps to link the meaning of life wherever lived.

### ✻ THOUGHTS ✻

**I** ONCE came across a striking sentence in a little book. Here it is: "Thoughts clothe an empty room more certainly than wall paper."

How very beautiful.

There are simple homes into which we all go from time to time, which show no evidence of wealth or display. But the minute you enter and meet the occupants, you feel that you are in the presence of something infinitely finer than all wealth—thoughts that are heavily jeweled!

My friend tells me of a wonderful character who works in a small room, and you speculate as to why he doesn't have a larger room. But the minute you talk to that man, the room itself seems to enlarge.

The poor we have always with us. But they are not with us everywhere we go. Our thoughts are. We can't escape them.

You can send your thoughts around the world in



a few minutes. You can change them, enlarge them, give them growth, and then again you can tie your thoughts to those of others.

Your thoughts are you. They represent you at the council table of every important event in which you are interested.

How full of history is each one of our thoughts. Each touched with the bygone color of a billion and more other thoughts.

What a glorious contact we have with the world and time in our thoughts!

We can lie awake at night and think. We can wake up in the morning and think. We can think on the street, in the office, on trains—no matter where.

✧ *SHADOWS AND THE LIGHT* ✧

As I read in my friend's book the other evening, I came upon this sentence—"If a man lives in shadow the hour comes at last when there is no more light."

Only as the shadows contrast and beautify all light, are shadows themselves beautiful.

As all work and no play made Jack a very dull boy, so would life grow unbearable without the shadows against the light.

The little child runs into the house with tears streaming down his cheeks. He has been mistreated. Some agency in the world has upset the plan of his heart. He thought that everything was play and



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## JUST AMONG FRIENDS

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happiness. He discovers that there is something strange, even in his little world that he doesn't understand. And so the tears come. They help. So also does a kiss from the mother who loves.

And our world is just a grown-up and enlarged child's world.

Sometimes the shadows creep into our hearts and depress our thoughts and make us lonely. And then just across the street we see the sunlight! But the trouble is that so many of us prefer to stay in the shadow. And so do we put off the gentle and mother kiss of the sunlight which is able to wipe away the tears.

Often do I feel that there are those who are not content excepting when they are in discontent! And there are those who rather like to have you know that they are ill and unfortunate.

There are no more wonderful characters to be found than the spiritually brave.

And you usually find such on the sunlight side of the street before the shadows of the day turns their way.

### THE PRAYER OF ONE ✻ DISTURBED ✻

**L**IKE the leader in a frightened flock, with the clouds gathering fast and the day darkening, and the wind growing furious—that is the way I feel, God, and so I have rushed to you who are able and full of understanding.

Gather me to you in your strong arms, God. No-

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## JUST AMONG FRIENDS

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body is around—just you and your frail creation. I am so disturbed. This impulsive makeup has overstepped itself. In its anxiety to climb just a little higher, do a little more good, find a little more beauty, it ran too fast—and so now it's all mixed up—frightened like the troubled sheep.

But, like the Shepherd of the sheep, whose soul is always stronger than the instinct of the dumb which he tends, please, God, pay attention to me!

Soothe with your understanding, warm with your sympathy, lift up with your love. You see, God, I really need you more than I even know myself.

For the frightened never quite realize their danger. If they did, they might be braver. But, being confused, and much lost to themselves, they flounder, and then have to run to someone who is strong enough to bring them back to themselves—and place them upon higher ground. Don't you see, God? And don't you see that this pleader is the one who needs strength greatly?

Press me just a trifle tighter to your heart, God. Let me feel the impulse of your superior spirit. Quiet this throbbing pulse, and give sleep to these restless nerves.

Be a mother to me, during this darkened spell, God. I need to be mothered. After that I can go back into the world and be a man. Strong—and unafraid.

But right now, God, I am a boy, with all the confusion of conflicting doubts and beliefs, full of ache, hungry in heart, ignorant in spirit.

Please, God, take care of this flounderer of yours!

✧ BEGINNINGS ✧

How beautiful beginnings are! I watch for the tiny crocus flowers of early spring. I go out into the woods and look for their tiny heads poking their exquisite beauty into an oncoming summertime. They make me think of the roses that the flower girls scatter before the bride on her way to the altar.

And then there are the unfoldings of the leaves at springtime, followed by the first songs of returned birds. Then, before one hardly realizes the fact, autumn has come with its golden and gypsy garb, only to be followed by the first fall of the snow.

The beginnings of a city, of a building, of a business, of a book, of a work of art. How fascinating each step. Whenever I pass the great Woolworth building in New York City I think of that country lad who started the five and ten cent store idea—with just a single store in a country town. And I am reminded that that first store was a failure! Now I think of the millions upon millions of dollars earned each year by that great organization—started by an idea that failed at first.

I like to read of the beginnings of a man or woman. I think of Marshall Field who used to stay late at night to work at his stock when but a boy in the Potter Palmer store in Chicago. And then I think of the greatest retail store in the world that he left as his monument.

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## JUST AMONG FRIENDS

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The most contagious thing in this world is an idea!

One of the surest ways you have to be happy is to start something.

Or to be the means of starting someone else to start something.

But the divinest beginning of all is the sweet beginning of love in a human heart.

### ✻ WINTER ✻

WHO can wholly miss the glories and beauties of Winter?

The other day we took a train in our town and before we came to the place where we were to put up for the night, snow had fallen.

Outside of the car the earth had been covered with its ermine coat. We looked out of the window. How silent this operation of the night.

"Just snow," remarked many. More than snow, we thought. For every single flake was a masterpiece in design, as though fashioned by an angel, or some perfect workman in the sky.

Why such perfect and exquisite designs? Why "just snow"?

We walked down the street a little later and saw these little miracles melt upon the pavements. As though they were just fading breaths from the heart of some poem breathed by an unknown singer of beauty.

Winter is here, we said. How glorious it is!

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## JUST AMONG FRIENDS

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Today we walked among the sleeping leaves that but yesterday were green upon the trees. They will sleep long underneath the warmth of winter's snow—and then in the springs of tomorrow, they will rise again, after having given nourishment to the ground.

The bare and bending trees, the vast, extending fields, resting before the planting and the harvest, and now white and clean. The lone sparrows. The frosty waterfall. The lovely forests showing forth their frame and glistening under the cold morning sun, with their branches wrapped around diamonds.

### ✧ IF I SHOULD GO BROKE ✧

I SHALL not go broke. But if I should, this is about the way I would look at the situation—

I would be thankful, first of all, that I have had health. For while I have been building my business, I have looked upon health as more valuable than the making of money.

I would be glad that I had used much of my money to buy books, paintings, etchings and other works of art—for if I should have to part with them all, still would the love of them and their undying beauty remain with me to bring back many a happy thrill of their loveliness.

I would think of all the glad moments of my life and hold a convention among them, and call upon every happy memory for a speech.

I would go out under the heavens at night—alone

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## JUST AMONG FRIENDS

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—and say: “Well, God, I still have your stars to cheer me and to point me on and up. They smile the same upon a man whether he is wealthy or without a penny.”

I would walk out into the country. I would ask the birds for their favorite songs, and request their best concert on the spot.

I would wander through thick woods that I might get their inimitable nature smell, and I would have a word for every flower I came to—for each would remember that I had been its enthusiastic friend in former years.

I would meditate upon the thoughts of hundreds of my friends who used to talk to me in silence from the pages of their written books.

I would think of all the kind and thoughtful things ever spoken to me by those I had loved throughout the years.

And then I would decide how lucky I was—and start all over again!

### ✻ ON STARTING ALL OVER ✻

ONE of my friends, who is a famous writer, once told me that he had discarded all his idea files and memoranda slips, and that now he just wanted a clean mind and a clean piece of paper.

I have thought a great deal of my friend's statement. I wonder if most of us wouldn't profit if we just started each day with a clean mind and a clean piece of paper.

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## JUST AMONG FRIENDS

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The trouble with many of us is that we carry too much with us as we go along, until we get our lives themselves all cluttered up and confused.

I have a friend who never gets stampeded. He cleans up as he goes. He seems ready at all times for the handling of a big or small problem. I often consult him, feeling the strength of his superior control.

I have noted that when catastrophe or misfortune comes to such a sort he never flinches, and though all may be wiped from under his feet, he stands on his feet as nobly proud as before—and just goes on to rebuild better for all that he has lost.

Chicago and San Francisco built greater and better after having been burned and earthquaked.

That man or woman whose character has been through the fire, tried, tested and refined, has something to show the world for it all. And such people nearly always live to prove their worth.

It is no disgrace to start all over. It's usually an opportunity.

### ✧ *LITTLE SINGERS* ✧

LIKE everything else that was meant to be normal, Happiness must be expressed.

In nature we see this overflow from the smallest form to the greatest. Especially do we find this happy expression amongst the little fellows in the insect world.

The other evening I read from an essay by Laf-



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## JUST AMONG FRIENDS

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radio Hearn—his gatherings from Greek poetry as regards insect life and the songs of these minute inhabitants of the earth. Some of these little poems were written over 2000 years ago. Here is one of the selections attributed to Meleager, one of the loveliest of the later Greek singers in literature:

*"O thou cricket that cheatest me of my regrets, the soother of slumber; O thou cricket that art the muse of ploughed fields, and art with shrill wings the self-formed imitation of the lyre, chirup me something pleasant, while beating thy vocal wings with thy feet. How I wish, O cricket, that thou wouldst release me from the troubles of much sleepless care, weaving the thread of a voice that causes love to wander away! And I will give thee for morning gifts drops of dew, and a leek ever fresh, cut up small for thy mouth."*

As a boy I used to hide away and watch for hours until I might hear the soft song-swish of the humming bird as it flitted from honeysuckle to honeysuckle. Even the tiny mosquito has an interesting song—if you hear it behind bars!

But somehow there is such consolation in the merry song of the cricket. I have listened to it for hours after a long evening of reading or writing—just sat and listened to the concert, and wondered what the leaders were thinking of their listeners.

Stepping up a little into the bird world, what a noisy, happy body the little wren! I look forward

each year to its return. It sings and works, works and sings.

Then there is the honey-bee and the bumble-bee. Who could ever fathom the joy that they intermingle with the fragrance of the flowers about which they flit, as they suck the sweetness from the heart of these givers of color and beauty?

✧ *TO YOU WHO ARE ALONE* ✧

**A**LONE people have to never mind a great deal. I have noted that among the most superior folk of the world have been those who have been most alone. Jesus alone in the mountain—praying. And in the wilderness, building for a ministry that was to reshape men's hearts all through the centuries.

Great thinking, momentous decisions, intricate planning, demand quiet. You can't buy courage in the marketplace. You have to make it yourself—alone.

Where did that leader get his faith, his almost sublime understanding of human hope? He got it alone.

How many a brave person wears the mask of carelessness and lengthened laughter so as to silence the lonely call.

One may be very lonely in a great group.

The boy in the story, told in the Bible, thought that he could find happiness in the society of the many, amongst the gay and seemingly carefree of

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## JUST AMONG FRIENDS

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the big city. But he soon learned how lonely one could get in the midst of false people, and so turned about and cried to himself: "*I will arise and go to my father.*" That father got lonely, too. What a feeling when the boy saw his father in the distance, in front of his country home! What a meeting as he threw himself to the ground before that father and buried his head under the rough hands of that abounding love!

People who love and are loved are not lonely. Love makes all the difference in the world. It is the world.

Flowers are all love. The song of the bird is all love. The beauty of the lowering sun, behind a drapery of clouds, is an expression of love, interpreted through a touch of nature. Lovely thoughts are inspired by love.

So, to you who are lonely, I would say: "Love and you will be loved. Give, and more than you give will come back to you."

### ✻ THE RICH PERSONALITY ✻

SUCH a very large number of people go around hungry in their hearts.

To big people, men and women who are rich in material goods, or famous, or very distinguished, as well as those less favored—this hunger comes. It is no respecter of persons.

I have so often wondered why this is: why people crave so much and are so seldom satisfied. Perhaps

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## JUST AMONG FRIENDS

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it is so that hope may warm the earth and make a braver lot of us all who lack so much. Or, perhaps, to inspire each one of us to open what stores he has and learn to give. For giving begets so much.

My friend is so rich in personality. Quite often very silent, but so filled with that inexplicable something that lifts you just the minute that that presence comes around.

This rich personality is such a gift. Like a rare gem that you don't find very often. But like the beauty in that gem that doesn't understand itself how it happened.

It is the mystery behind all beauty that makes beauty. Where does the pansy get its coloring?

Who makes rich personalities? Why do they draw us very close to them and make us, too, want to be like them? What is it in this sort of person that makes us feel his inner life?

Why does the rich personality give us food that satisfies our hunger? We do not know.

Maybe it's the simple God who comes to us when we are very lonely and who just grows up in us when we come to people whom we may serve or love.

### ✻ TWO RED BOOKS ✻

A READER friend sends me two books—one "The Faith of Robert Louis Stevenson" and the other "Poetry and Philosophy of George Meredith."

For many months these two visitors have been

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## JUST AMONG FRIENDS

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under my hospitality—a hospitality, I should say, that has been warm and appreciative. Some days they spend in my library. Today they are on my office desk as I write—while all the other folks are “out to lunch.”

I like to take up these two lovely friends and talk to them. I open one or the other—and here and there are passages that the owner has marked, expressive of the appreciation of these two books when home. I note that one of the books was a gift from a famous and beloved actress to my reader friend.

Books are no respecter of persons. Wherever they are wanted, they will go.

The poorest in knowledge may aspire to be the most learned. It was Elihu Burritt who learned more than forty languages while he pumped the bellows at his forge—so that he became world renowned as “The Learned Blacksmith.” In fact he became a most useful citizen, putting forth great efforts, as far back as 1848, toward world peace.

But to go back to my two red-coated visitors. I pick up one or the other book every once in a while. I have purposely not read either book clear through in regular order. Because, you see, I wanted them to stay quite a while.

Some of these days, however, they will be sent home with the best good wishes I possess.

How wonderful it is to send a book a-visiting!

Sometime you send two red books out on a visit—or green ones—or blue ones—and see how happy they come back.

For they do (sometimes) come back!

✧ VOICES ✧

THERE is no sound that so vibrates in the heart as does that of a human voice. And when it has kindness, sweetness, beauty, love mixed in its elements, there is nothing to compare with it.

Long after those we have known and loved have passed to silent lands, or have been long separated, there remains that voice.

I still have the clearest memory of my mother's voice, though it is now nearly 25 years since I last heard it. But it had all the beauty of spring in it, all the fragrance of a flower in its colorful accents.

Physical beauty in a measure fades away, but the beauty of a well modulated voice only grows with the years. It may carry youth all the way through its journey. And all the strength of trial and test, of sorrow, of disappointment, run along with the human voice.

No matter what expression you may give to your face, you cannot disguise your voice. Its genuineness and sincerity—or the opposite—stand out. For the voice is what you are.

It isn't so much what you say as how you say it, or rather, how you feel it.

The voice of a leader is always one earning respect. Half the course of history has been directed by a voice.

Blindfold the dog and yet he knows "his master's voice." There are no two voices in the world exactly alike.



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## JUST AMONG FRIENDS

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A pleasing voice is greatly to be preferred to a handsome face or a highly educated mind.

Voices are the strings upon which great character plays its tunes. Nobility, strength, fineness, love are all echoed from the voice.

### ✧ CLEAN UP AS YOU GO ✧

**O**PPOSING Generals in a war have no sentiment. The job of each alike is to win.

Each knows that light equipment may turn the tide at a critical moment.

He who enters a new day with work half finished, that could have been finished, drags baggage behind him that slows him up.

If you clean up as you go, you know all the time that you are going.

Things left unfinished cause you worry. Worry robs and kills. Things that you dream about, think about and plan, stimulate and inspire you.

Clean up as you go.

That means building and building—bigger and better.

The executive can harbor no unfinished business. His business is that of gaining port, unloading, re-loading and—on with the game!

That must mean—clean up as you go.

Events are either a thing of the past or else something very much of the present. You can't warm them over as you would a Christmas turkey!

We must all of us have much of the conqueror in



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## JUST AMONG FRIENDS

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us. We must keep passing on for new worlds. If we stay with old worlds behind, thick in dispute, we become lost and entangled.

Clean up as you go.

Then everything will be faced new each day. Your life background will have mellowed, your experience richened—and you will walk ahead with your chin up!

### ✻ THE RAIN ✻

WE were looking out of the window today—my friend and I. “How beautiful the grass today,” said my friend. “It was so dead and dull yesterday.”

“But it rained last night,” I replied.

And so with the rain comes freshness, growth, enlarged life, budding plants, expanding roots, harvests, and the leafed trees.

The birds understand this marvel of nature. Just note how happily they sing after the rain.

The rain wakes up hidden life. It breaks up the sleep of winter and stirs the heart of everything that goes to make Nature beautiful.

Sunshine does its noblest work after the rain.

And so we must not forget that much rain in our little lives does its wholesome good, opens up the buds of our hidden natures, expands the roots of our bitterest experiences and enlarges every avenue of our being.

I wouldn't want to live in a place where it rained

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## JUST AMONG FRIENDS

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all the time, or where the sun shone all the time. I want to live where there is both rain and sunshine. I want my life mixed, I want it tried.

I want a poet's heart that can see God in a rain drop and in the diamond glitter of that drop under the rays of the sun.

I want a farmer's faith that looks up into the sky and sees rain there because it means abundance when harvest time comes.

Often I go to sleep praying for some power in heaven to—

*"Loosen the notes in a silver shower."*

### ✧ THAT SOMEBODY ✧

THERE is in the lives of all of us at times—that somebody. That somebody who understands, who steps up and helps without being asked, that somebody who gives the glass of cool, fresh water, who soothes the troubled brow and presses the hand—just knowing, that's all.

That somebody who comes from nowhere seemingly, who wasn't expected, who didn't want to be detected—but who only wanted to be of service.

That somebody who is so fully acquainted with trouble, who has known defeat, who has walked the wine-press of genuine sorrow, that somebody who doesn't parade, who cares not at all for show, but who never hesitates at convention, or anything else if something generous and useful and beautiful may be performed.

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## JUST AMONG FRIENDS

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That somebody who smiles at disaster, who brushes aside unjust criticism and walks proudly to the place where he feels that he can do a good job and then pass on.

That somebody to whom sleep and rest seem trivial when another cannot sleep and rest, that somebody with the super-human soul who sweetens the world with his breath as a flower with its perfume.

That somebody who is not afraid to soil his hands in toil, that somebody who would go hungry to feed another, that somebody who doesn't care for display, acclaim or applause.

That somebody who is always looking around that he may find something unique to do at some unexpected moment for someone who needs it most.

You can't do too much for that somebody. You can't be too kind, too gentle, too thoughtful, too generous to that—somebody, especially if you love that somebody.

### ✻ AMUSEMENTS ✻

THERE is no more accurate interpretation of the daily life and thinking of a man than is found in the way he seeks his amusements.

List to me the amusements of a man and I will tell you what manner of man he is.

Sooner or later the hollowness of a false and mimic life stares us in the face with the expression of an awful unreality. And we see nothing but the

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## JUST AMONG FRIENDS

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story of wasted years, vain scramblings for power, selfish pleasure, and vain display.

Noon arrives, but into the heart no nectar of love or unselfish service has been stored. The afternoon wanes. Dusk hovers. But to the thoughtless waster there is no glow in the Sunset, no Invisible Watcher during the silent hours when dreams creep in.

When the man trots the boy in him through the years, he is a pretty safe companion. He can be trusted. Because the man will whisper things to the boy that the boy doesn't know about, and the boy in turn will keep giving of his heart so that age becomes only relative and youth an enveloping spirit clear to the last edge of life itself.

The leaves of a plant are like so many tiny laboratories that look after the forming of the sugar that sweeten the roots of things we eat, or the grapes that hang in gorgeous clusters waiting for the touch of our hands.

And so do the amusements of a person form the sweet or the bitter which comes out in the heart, or ripens into character.

There are those who seek to deaden the monotony of their lives through exciting amusements, in crowds of jollity that are pungent with insincerity, jealousy, and cynicism. But when it is all over, even the aimless life goes to its bed sick at heart and hungry for that which alone can bring warmth and glow, peace and sweetness to the soul.

Loneliness is a terrible thing, but if you carry the beauty of life and love in your heart, it will compensate richly for all the spoils of a tinselled gaiety.

✻ *A PRAYER FOR A PAL* ✻

**P**LEASE, God, give me a Pal! Not just someone to trace my tracks, not alone a trailer, or a trotter beside me, but someone always near, both day and night—true to me, brave to me, dear to me—all a Pal.

Someone to stay near me, someone to go far for me, someone to give to me.

Not because I want to keep, or hoard, not because I am anybody in this body of dust itself, but because I represent a Plan, a Hope, a moving Entity of love and courage, a human Design, multi-colored with Infinite thoughts gathered from errands back and forth from where you live, God, and where you move and have your being—whether that place be the heart of a rose or a battered being watched over by your kindly eyes.

Take me by the hand, God. What warmth, what comfort you give. Now lead me to a Pal! Somebody a little like me, but so unlike me, someone without a trait of quit or complaint.

When it's cold, when it's dark, when it's dangerous going, I need an understanding Pal to lighten all the loneliness, all the losses of this soul of mine, and to touch me in the silent night, telling me that I am not alone.

Give me a Pal, O God, who can look every fault and failure, every scar of sin I own right in the face, and then love me for what I am of good and noble desire.

I want a Pal who will defend me when I am cornered by the false and bitter beasts of human prey. Someone who will care and walk the route so thickly rocked, so thorned by winding ways.

But I do not want an easy Pal, nor do I want to be one. The way of regal Palship is hard, a tried affair—with the steel of courage always showing.

You see, God, the sort of Pal I want, I need, isn't born excepting here and there over a world of scattered human beings, and only once or twice within a long, long lifetime. The search is arduous too, and you don't always know when the right Pal arrives. So I want you to help me out, God. Give me a Pal.

Then, God, you, somehow or other, slip up silently to that Pal and whisper assurance that will make that Pal feel and know that I am the kind of a Pal I want my Pal to be.

✻ WHERE IS HAPPINESS ✻

THE one undying pursuit of the human race has always been for happiness. Whether in the jungle or the mansion.

And when so important an instrument as the Declaration of Independence came up for writing, Jefferson added in that great preamble that familiar phrase—“*the pursuit of happiness*” as an inalienable right.

Stevenson says that “*to travel hopefully is a better thing than to arrive.*”

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## JUST AMONG FRIENDS

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Happiness moves throughout the world like air, like delicate perfumery that has been tossed from exquisite cups into the heart of flowers, like songs that have warmed in throats until they had to break their way into expression, like the wings of the swift flying bird seeking the sunshine above the clouds.

So it is that the business of life evolves itself not in the securing of happiness but in its pursuit—working, hoping, praying for it—until all at once we find that we have caught it in our arms.

Where is happiness?

It is everywhere—and nowhere! But to be always expecting happiness is to surely find it sometime, somehow.

But happiness doesn't "just come." It's a hunting game and a giving game. Where is it? Maybe in the hovel, maybe at the sick-bed, maybe in the lonely room where God likes to creep in and talk.

Most of the happiness in this world you will find in the heart of the one you have done most to make happy.

### ✻ TO BE A TREE ✻

I KNOW nothing about reincarnation, excepting what I have read or learned of its meaning. But it is beautiful to think that these souls of ours go on and on—after they have played about in this body.

Many of the ancients believed that they would live in animals and plants and things in their future state.



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## JUST AMONG FRIENDS

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It is an interesting speculative thought to have this body someday melt into the sap of the ground and work its way into a tree, climb the branches, spreading out and touching leaves until they form into their beautiful shapes giving color and beauty to the landscape about, or perhaps here and there giving nourishment to a group of flowers that later ripen into fruit for bird or beast or man.

Just sit under a tree during a storm and note how it blends its life even to disturbing elements. And then experience its shade during a hot summer day. Or remember its beauty out in the cool of the morning or evening during the rising of a sun or its setting.

Or, travel in your dreams back to the farm house and listen to the concert of the birds at dusk.

God must have thought a great deal about trees, for He made so many different kinds and scattered them clear around His world. And He put into people's hearts the desire for them, the love for them, so that a home looks incomplete without them about it.

I recently passed over a great desert. For miles nothing but sage brush and cactus. Then, I would see a little farm house with a bunch of trees about it, or perhaps some cows eating nearby.

Some day I hope to write a book which will be called, "My Book of Trees." And I will have pictures and little stories in it of trees that grow all over the surface of this earth.

I wouldn't mind being a beautiful tree!

*JUST A WHITE SHEET*  
\*      *OF PAPER*      \*

**I**T is late at night. The room in which I sit is still. The pungent odors of falling leaves have been passing through my library windows all evening. Books, my silent friends, are scattered all about me. They never scold me. They come to me whenever I reach for them.

I have placed in my little typewriter just another sheet of white paper on which I write another simple Talk, soon to go out over the miles and to appear for those who may perhaps share the pleasure and happiness of my simple thoughts.

One can never measure the influence that a few words put to just a white sheet of paper may have.

In my books are letters that have come from Presidents, great actors, writers, explorers and thinkers. I treasure them. They were written to give encouragement and to offer appreciation. In my desk at my office are a bundle of these letters from my mother written many years ago. But when I take them out they smell with the fragrance of love, sacrifice and suffering.

A letter is a very simple thing. But I would rather have it as a gift from an appreciative human being than all the gold that has ever been mined. I have a friend who is a very busy man. I have known him for years. But he is never too busy to drop me a little note of appreciation over the years. In his employ many years ago was another of my friends.

He, too, has the habit, and whenever he sees the chance to give a little boost of encouragement, along comes that message on just a white sheet of paper. Every day I breathe out my love to these royal human beings, without title, who always delight in sending out themselves on just a white sheet of paper to lift this writer's spirit.

Richard Harding Davis had the habit of sending little notes to new writers, as well as telegrams, to tell them of his appreciation of good work.

Seemingly just a white sheet of paper with something on it that has come from a human heart, doesn't appear on its face to amount to much, but—just ask the man who receives it!

✱ SURPRISES ✱

WHO doesn't like a happy surprise? My business has always been interesting because it is so full of surprises.

I go to my desk each day never knowing what pleasant piece of news may greet me. Of course an unpleasant surprise may crop up once in a while, but that can be pushed aside.

There is a genius to the business of friendship. And some of the little things that make of friendship a thing of happiness are the unexpected surprises that keep it vibrant. If you are all the time thinking of some out-of-the-way surprise for your friend, you cannot help but bind him the closer to you and find in his happiness the key to your own.

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## JUST AMONG FRIENDS

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The beauty of the sunset lies largely in its moving, its changes, until it fades beyond the horizon.

The charm of the seasons lies in their separateness and their constant surprises. In the springtime you look out of the window and see bare trees. But some morning you see the buds, and then, hardly before you are aware, the green coverings and the white and pink flowerings are all aglow, like a young bride.

It's the same with summer, autumn and winter. Each has its changes that break the monotony of the year. And we have our moods! Some pleasant and happy—some not so appealing.

I like to have my friend remember me with some special thoughtfulness which I do not expect. And so do you.

Small, dainty gifts always mean most. Because they come from the heart.

Little daily surprises tucked in here and there season whole days and often save a life, many times rebuilding one.

## THE WORLD OF MAKE-BELIEVE

UNDERNEATH our dreams are the things we do —and the men and women that we are.

Just bordering—always—this practical world, is that world of Make-believe, through which all the dross of the artist, the writer, the builder, the thinker, and dreamer is sifted.

We never reach our ideals. We only think about

them, reach for them—and run after them. But this is the thing that keeps them alive for us. Of course there are those who believe that they will reach their ideals—and so it is that we have great men and women.

And it is much better to aim for worthy things and plan toward large achievements, even though you do not gain them, than to aim at nothing and get everything that you don't want.

The child knows nothing of the bitterness, the suffering and disappointments of life. Its smiles are bathed in a veritable sea of Make-believe. And it sees many of the great things that the old heads worry so much about—and yet without any disturbance, and all within a spirit of belief and reality.

Let the child dream! And leave the man or woman alone with his or her dreams.

When George Westinghouse went to that unique old man, Commodore Vanderbilt, with his invention for stopping cars by air pressure, Vanderbilt laughed at the chap and showed him the door. Now every train is equipped with those brakes in their most improved manner.

The writer of fiction sees the ways of men and women, then he dreams and leads some god of the imagination to these people of his brain and asks that god to make new clothes for them and put uniqueness to their lives. Then he writes a great story that we all read.

We like to feel that we are in countries which we may never visit, in lives with which we may never associate beyond these Make-believe visits of ours.

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## JUST AMONG FRIENDS

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### *SPEND A LITTLE*



STEVENSON's suggestion, "earn a little, and spend a little—less," is an admirable motto that could be safely and profitably adapted by anyone.

Saving can be overdone, for a man advances and grows only as he gives of himself. And this takes in a man's money as well as his own self. Lowell had this in mind when he said that the "gift without the giver is bare."

All through life we must keep giving—many times when it means sacrifice and the giving up of things we desire for ourselves. Even by this method there is a tinge of selfishness to giving, for we learn that only as we give do we get—friendship, affection, beauty, inspiration and strength.

I read in my daily newspaper recently the story of a hoarder. He was being wheeled about a sanitarium, and he often told the story of how he had made millions. But the doctors told those who listened that the man had but a few months to live—the victim of work and saving without giving to others.

Spend a little. And keep spending a little—just so long as you do not spend all that you earn.

The love of making money is to be commended, but not the love of just putting it in a bank or something else and just keeping it there to increase for the earner alone.

Character and generosity spread out. They keep extending long after the creator of them has passed on into silence.



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## JUST AMONG FRIENDS

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The habit of not letting money get too intimate with you is a good one to form. It must be taught to trot errands for you—to take choice smiles and happiness to those who lack or who need help.

Spend a little. Money isn't life.

### ✻ PUNISHMENT ✻

SOMEHOW or other I can never reconcile punishment with a religion of love. And the religion of love is the only one I know anything about.

When a person does wrong and knows that he does wrong, he suffers enough.

Prisons will never make this world a better world. To punish a child doesn't make that child good, but merely distorts his sense of proportion and pours the poison of fear into his ungrown life.

The God that I love doesn't punish people. He merely plants understanding in their hearts and they punish themselves when they do that which is irregular in the conduct of their lives.

All physical and state punishment is a specie of ignorance. Just as war is a method of ignorance and cruelty.

You find no trace of punishment in nature.

There is perfect harmony in the natural world. Even the disturbances that arise from time to time, tend only to equalize and benefit.

If nations would spend, what they do for arms and powder, for education, teaching men to think and to become useful and beneficial, there would be no mis-



understandings that could not be settled easily over a conference table.

All offenders against society are ignorant people, no matter how keen their minds may be. To punish such people is to go into their own error with them and share their guilt.

Jesus never taught punishment. And where in all history can you find an example of such conduct and inspiring character?

When a state takes a life does it give back to this world the life which its victim took away?

### *A COMPANIONATE MARRIAGE*

I WAS in a bookstore the other day and the clerk handed a young lady a late book about the companionate marriage.

"No, I don't care for it," said the young lady. "I already have a companionate marriage, and it couldn't be happier, so why waste time reading about it."

I happened to know the people who made up that marriage. I knew that they have been lovers ever since they had first courted each other. I also knew that each had had great burdens and problems to solve from the very first. But neither had ever complained. In fact, they were thoroughly in love—though married! And I believe that they will always be in love, and be very happy, for they both looked life in the face and were not intimidated by it.

People who look for an ideal state in marriage

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## JUST AMONG FRIENDS

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will never find it. This is not an ideal world. Babies must cry, and fall down stairs and get hurt. And the Doctor must come and mend things. Debts must enter and dance like wild ghosts about the little home. And there will be enough tears to float a ship of laughter—and endanger it. And often tip it over.

But the companionate marriage, which I choose to term the understandable marriage, will march on and on.

A marriage that can't be steered aright deserves to be wrecked. It's human in the first place. And you can't put two square pegs into one round hole.

But let's glorify a few of the marriages that win out—that don't get into books, and which are made on this earth and not in Heaven!

There should be a few stories about the glorious marriages of the world. The *Titanic* buried many of them. But only by way of example.

There should be more marriages united by respect and fewer by Justices of the Peace.

### ✧ MASTERY OVER FORTUNE ✧

CHARLES LAMB in one of his delightful little essays—this one, "Captain Jackson"—tells of the rare good fortune of his friend in having achieved happiness through believing he had all when he had almost nothing.

In the essay Lamb remarks that "Rich men direct you to their furniture, poor ones divert you from

it." And then he closes his essay in these words: "But for a man to put the cheat upon himself; to play the Bobadil at home; and, steeped in poverty up to the lips, to fancy himself all the while chin-deep in riches, is a strain of constitutional philosophy, and a master over fortune, which was reserved for my old friend Captain Jackson."

Very few of us live free lives. We want what we haven't got, and probably wouldn't want after we got it. We let trifles chase us around. We face big things and show superhuman courage and then spoil it all by being afraid of the dark nothings that flare up and give us the laugh dozens of times a day.

So that it becomes a rare gift to be able to master fortune, to allow adversity to soften and beautify us, and to bear the brunt of the day's hard knocks without once losing our sense of humor or our steady bearing.

The man who keeps his feet upon the ground may travel anywhere!

The fact remains that you cannot make the future out of the past, excepting as you learn from what you have missed.

Life may always start today.

Great success rarely comes early. For genuine success must have a broad and deep background. We must learn what it means to master what we are and then to lead ourselves to a definite goal.

The great owners in this life are those who appreciate. All the others are steeped in poverty and loss, no matter how much they can call their own.

✻ DOES IT PAY TO PRAY? ✻

I WOULD answer the subject of this Talk by asking:  
Does it pay to wake up in the morning?

We know so very little. But this we do know—there is something very wonderful beyond the toil of these hands and feet, this mind, this striving, hopeful, fretful frame of ours.

The greatest minds of the world, since history began, have been minds that comprehended prayer. A prayer is color taken out of the Universe! God is in color. We search for Him, and find Him—by going to Him. And there is something that comes back that satisfies. That is why we pray.

The honest, sincere prayer is not for selfish gain, not for acclaim, not for notice at all. It is for somebody, higher and more worthy than we are, to come and stay with us for a little while.

The answered prayer is that prayer which is breathed through the halls of an honest and fearless heart.

And the bravest prayer is that which is prayed when no danger is about—when nothing but the longing of a lonely and discouraged human being looks up and wants somebody to come down and give a lift. That's where God comes in. He likes to give people lifts, who feel that they should have them.

We really pray to our better selves.

He who has done great wrong, or who has suffered great wrong, or who has borne more of the

troubles or defeats of life than appears his lot, will readily understand. He prays—and is refreshed and rebuilt by his prayer.

The happy one will understand, too. He prays to thank—and his heart is washed out anew, his life strengthened and given unusual beauty.

You cannot see perfume. But you immediately think of the flowers that gave. So, you also know the life that is given to prayer—you think of the God who gave all life in the beginning.

Does it pay to pray? I think it does. Or else I would not feel that I amounted to so little.

✱ *THE DROP-OUT LIFE* ✱

**I**T is good that, though human beings have so much in common, an uncommon human being is not common.

Every once in a while I come across someone who makes me marvel at human nature itself. I have a friend in mind who seems to me to be one of the marvels among humans. He seems to know everything—yet he is not what one would call a “learned man.” He had nothing but a common school education. He never has walked into the halls of a college.

And yet, he is a scientist, an artist, an engineer, a fine writer, a biologist, a man who knows the stars as a boy knows his alphabet, a remarkable builder with his hands, a poet, a man, and—a boy!

Here is one who has carried the experiences of his

life all along the way with him. And though he is now in middle life, he is still in youth.

And all because he has dropped out of his life nothing from all his experience that has been worth while.

The drop-out life is one which becomes more and more barren as it increases in years. When its youth is gone, its youth is dead. And so in all things.

My library grows in size with the years. I cast loving eyes down the long rows of books as they brightly stand on end in their places along the shelves. As the number increases and space becomes a problem, I almost take each literally by the hand and wonder if I may not now part with this one or that—but no, are they not all my friends? I cannot drop out a single one from my association.

Our lives are somewhat like a library. On its shelves are the memories and experiences of the years. And all very dear and intimate to us.

Why should we live a drop-out life?

✻ *AUTUMNAL GLORY* ✻

EVERY phase of life has its beauty. Who does not love the child? Who does not thrill with the zest and freedom of youth? Who is not inspired by the accumulated wisdom of middle life? Who is not made kinder and more tolerant by the poise and serenity of the shadowed years?

How wise the Creator was when he arranged the year into seasons. I often think of the loss to those



who are not blessed with the changing seasons of the middle climates.

Spring with its bloom, like youth. Summer with its ripened harvests, like middle age. Autumn with its falling leaves and gathered grain, like the virile years in the sixties. And winter with its frosts and snow, like the "silver threads among the gold," before that last Goodnight.

To us all each season has its own particular appeal. And this appeal changes with the years. To this writer autumn gives of its splendor as does no other season.

Today we rode through the beauties of autumnal Tennessee. Miles and miles of rolling, running hills—hills garbed in their best and choicest array of gypsy coloring. Bold and brilliant blues, russet reds, sleepy browns, laughing pinks, and aged golds. Tints of dashing orange and magenta. Sturdy oaks, and happy elms, gentle maples and birches with their hues of slender white. Copper browns above the feeding birds.

Streams with their overhanging parades of bush and sumac. Glistening stones polished by rippling waters, hurrying to get home. Beds of red and cream across the fields. Shocks of corn and freshly plowed lands. Winding roads. Slender twigs, hugged by brilliant vines. Fallen trees, pathetic of sheltered days gone by forever. Rail fences. Evergreens, like watchers at a parade. Velveted valleys asleep. Great crag formations, mute with hidden power.



Ripened elders, hanging heavy with their purpled berries. Cows grazing in the distance. Little barns, half concealed beyond the lane. Happy homes with little children playing beneath the falling leaves.

God in the dying day behind the Moon!

✻ *WOMAN COURAGE* ✻

I HAVE always marveled at the courage of women. It is a different courage from that of men. For one thing, it is far more spiritual.

A woman doesn't decide to be courageous—she just is.

George Bellows, who died in the very prime of a brilliant career, left an undying picture of woman courage in his remarkable lithograph of the execution of Edith Cavell. The silent figure of that courageous woman dominates every note in the picture and rivets an unforgettable scene of the brutality of some men.

Women do not advertise their courage. They lock it up. And all too often the world doesn't find the record until years after the deed has done its noble work.

Whether it be under the surgeon's knife, on the field of battle, or in times of peace when the strife of material gain tries to whip that woman body away from its soul, it is all the same—courage lifting its head, unbowed and unafraid.

In God's Hall of Fame I am sure that the figures of women predominate, though in the famous Hall

of Fame in New York City I can recall but one or two busts of women. Surely not for lack of desert. Why isn't the bust of Nancy Hanks to be found there?

What a deal of courage it must have taken to care for, and start toward a strong body and mind, the son Abraham Lincoln who was to become one of the noblest figures in all history. For it must be remembered that it was in poverty and want that this stalwart was born.

Little is known of the courage displayed by the uncomplaining women who are thrown upon their own resources in the great cities.

For every courageous act that a man displays there is the shadow of one still greater—the inspiration to that act in the courage of some woman unknown to the world at large.

✱ O, SLEEP! ✱

TONIGHT I shall remove the garments of the day and lie me down upon my bed to—sleep. I shall close my eyes, for they will be tired from much seeing of things.

For a few brief moments I shall review the work of the day or call to mind my moments of most intense joy. Perhaps I shall say a brief prayer of thanks or entreaty for a larger understanding, or an “oversoul.”

And then—almost before I am aware—I shall be fast asleep.

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## JUST AMONG FRIENDS

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O, Sleep, how kind and gentle you are—how like the hands of a mother smoothed across a troubled and tired brow!

Where do you take this body of mine, as the hours go by before I awake?

What is that mysterious force which dries up the aches and pains and with the morning brings peace and renewed life?

Why do we sleep? What is sleep?

The doctor comes into the sick room and says: "If he will, or can sleep he will get well!"

The worker comes to his home. He is very tired from the work and worry of the day. He longs for but one thing—sleep.

O, Sleep, what a friend to man!

How lost we are in sleep—and yet how happy as we are carried by happy dreams to pleasant places.

What a world of unkind and ungenerous thoughts are melted into forgetfulness as the hours of sleep roll on.

No wonder punishment is measured out to this body of ours as it is robbed of its precious sleep.

### ✻ HANDS ✻

I HAVE a small drawing of a lady's hand by a great artist which I prize very much. I have often shown it to others and they ask what I can see in a hand. I reply that I can see Life—and Character.

Long after the face has lost its youth and physical

charm, there remains great beauty in the human hand.

The hand that rocks the cradle—that presses the little form of life to its heart; the hand that writes great and useful and helpful thoughts, the hand that ploughs the ground that others may have food, the hand that shapes and builds—what other instrument in all this world is its equal?

No wonder we are able to see so much beauty in the hand!

Whenever I look at that marvelous statue of Lincoln by George Gray Barnard, my eyes are not held alone by the sad, bowed head and heavily lined face—but by the long fingered, gaunt, inexpressibly beautiful hands of this man.

I can understand the reason for “holding hands”—for when words melt into nothingness, then the hands begin to talk.

How many times have hands spoken eloquence that no words could ever approach.

I have watched the hands of the pianist, of the harpist, of the typist, of the writer, and I could imagine an invisible current of love—the love of one’s long labor toward perfection, streaming from the heart to the performance of those fingers and hands.

I like to see men shake hands. There is so much of warmth in this greeting, especially where there is sincerity in the man himself.

I do not know whether there is any real science or truth in the reading of the hand—but I am not so sure but what there is about everything there.

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## JUST AMONG FRIENDS

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### AN EVENING PRAYER



ANOTHER day has folded itself away. At this gate of night and dreams, dear Lord, I come for a renewal of strength and honest power.

I ask for a cleansed heart. I implore forgiveness for any act of word or thought which may have hurt or harmed someone somehow—somewhere.

I unload the pack of the day. I want shelter for the night within your house of love. I am cold—for there have been chilly winds during this day of toil. Warm me about the hearth of your heart. Will you, God, please?

What movement there was to this day, God! What a scurrying for place and power. What numbers of sad faces I passed. I guess these people missed seeing you, God. Maybe you will go to their homes tonight and talk to them silently—and make them happy, as you have done for me so many times.

I appreciate my opportunity at life, God, and pray most that I may know the depths of beauty behind and underneath every planted touch of love in this world.

Every time I see a beautiful flower, every time someone says something that makes me happy, every time I hear the voice of a bird, every time I see love or beauty worked out—whether through a lovely act or thought, or through some touch of Nature, or some written word—I shall look up and see you, God!

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## JUST AMONG FRIENDS

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Rest this body of mine tonight. And while I am adventuring through the silent souls of the stars, arrange my thoughts anew so that when the morning comes again, I may face the new day in better heart than ever before.

Take my love to those I love tonight. Teach me to give.

Touch the lids of these eyes. Soften the noises of the air without. Put out each garish light.

That's all, God. Goodnight!

### ✻ TO ONE IN SORROW ✻

IT is easy enough to smile and sing, to romp and play, when the music is on and when the crowd is around to add its cheer. But when sorrow comes and the music stops and the crowd leaves no trace save its memory, how much it means to have a ray of light drop from somewhere.

Perhaps just a simple note from one beloved, or a dainty group of flowers—breathing the breath of heaven itself. Or maybe just a look from one who knew and came to give.

I get so many letters from those in sorrow and who are afflicted. So this is a brief Talk to them—to you, whoever and wherever you may be.

I know how seemingly futile mere words are, especially when sent to those whose needs and circumstances are unknown. But as we are so often inspired and warmed by the thoughts of those absent and afar, whom we have known or loved in other



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## JUST AMONG FRIENDS

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days, so may these words inspire you whose thoughts have helped so greatly to make and keep these brief Talks an extended affair.

When sorrow comes we naturally are drawn to that power in human life that is strongest for comfort, and to those of our knowledge and acquaintance whose hearts have touched ours most.

And so it is that God comes first to us when the sun goes down and we are left alone in darkness.

No one can adequately explain God. He has to come to us and be the explanation Himself.

The beauty and strength of any character lies in its fearless acceptance.

People in sorrow, and who are afflicted, are always accepting, resigning—and loving! Which explains the momentum hidden within the silent forces of human experience. As for instance, the mother who gave all she had that the appetite of war might be appeased. In time her anguish may rock the axis of the earth!

### ✻ OUR SILENT GUEST ✻

NONE of us can be happy totally alone. Unless we keep sharing, and giving, we wither just like the leaves and flowers deprived of moisture.

I am always entertaining a silent guest in my thoughts and my heart. Someone near and dear to me, perhaps, but who may be separated by miles or over years of time. Or perhaps some great mind that I shall never come in contact with, excepting



through what it has written into some wonderful book.

Many times I have walked into the thick woods and there sat beside my silent friends, the flowers, and for hours we have talked a common language. Because I, being the inheritor of a love of beauty, and the flowers being beauty in themselves, we needed no introductions—we were friends right off, and each delicately colored visitor became my silent guest.

We really never need to be lonely—if we call in our silent guests!

Many evenings as I sit alone in my library, a deep sense of loneliness comes over me. I want to talk with someone who will understand my mood at that time. But the night without is very still, and it is late.

I walk over to this bookcase and then to that. I re-read a handful of treasured letters. I drink in the beauty from several pictures. Even my favorite little bronze seems to smile its warmth to me—but still that particular mood remains hungry. Then I take the big chair in front of my typewriter and reach for my beloved little volume *R.L.S.* Then the orchestra in Heaven played softly—and for hours my silent guest and I loved life anew together in that quiet room.

You may be a silent guest right now—far, far away!

Is it not then very important to keep this house of ours in beautiful order—clean and ready for whomsoever may call?

## *THE RADIANT PERSONALITY*

**T**HERE is something depressing about the sight of a house with the shades all drawn. I want to get by it as soon as possible.

And that's the way I feel about many human beings that I meet or pass—their shades are all drawn. Life is away!

But what a change in the cast of everything just the minute that a radiant personality enters your immediate circle. No matter what the day, no matter what the mood of the mind, the golden rays of a spiritual sunshine pierce their way into the innermost corners of your entire being.

You feel like emptying your soul at once and refilling it with the freshest of ozones that is the material of the radiant personality.

You feel like saying: "The very next time that the real sun and stars gleam out their message I want to meet them anew, and tell them how much they mean to me."

We are wonderfully and fearfully sensitized. A piece of extraordinary good news is able to lift us from the great depths of darkness to heights of happiness.

A smile with love and interest and appreciation behind it will do the same thing.

If, therefore, we are brought to feel the beautiful influence of the radiant personality from without us, how important for us to seek in every way to make our own personality a breathing, moving,

cheering affair in the midst of the contrary influences that fill the time and space of all that we are, wherever we are.

I do not like to think that it is my duty to help make the world a better place in which to live—but my privilege!

✱ THE STUMBLER ✱

THE world's sympathy drips for him who is frail.

I have always been drawn to that story of the lost sheep—the one out of the hundred. And there is nothing more dramatic and more poignant in its appeal to my heart interest, than that story of the Prodigal Son.

I can see God walking around in the big cities, keeping His eyes on those who are prone to stumble, those who often lose their footing, who need a helping hand, a pat on the back, and a little love poured into their faint hearts.

That's my idea of why there is a God—because He is needed!

One reason why I feel drawn toward the stumbler is that I so often stumble myself. I know how he feels.

Perfect folks have never appealed to me. Because they have so little in common with me. But he who has often lost what he has worked so hard to gain—and then put his head and heart to its finding again—I want him for a friend!

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## JUST AMONG FRIENDS

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So long as the world is spread with folks, just so long will the sweetness of the character of Christ perfume the lives of us all.

What a scene of beauty—that woman, a stumbler of the streets, she might be called, who stole into the house of Simon the Pharisee and sought Jesus that she might break the box of precious ointment across His feet, transformed by His Infinite Love! The entire room must have been silenced. A stumbler loved and blessed by One who understood.

Who does not stumble?

And who is he who may not rise if he will?

### TO A MOTHER LONG GONE

**H**OW I miss you, Mother dear! Your gentleness, your beauty of character, your thoughtfulness, your silent understanding that only a Mother could own—that love which you pressed into my heart so long ago, all come to me at this moment of longing for you.

I remember how you wrote me a little note and tucked it into the blanket that I took to college with me—and how I didn't discover it until I packed that blanket again to come home, four years later.

You understood me as no other human being ever has. You told me that I would meet many who would love me and many whom I would love—but that some would betray me and prove untrue. And you told me that my strength and happiness would

always rest upon my own sincerity of heart, and upon remaining true.

In my imperfect way I have tried to carry on—for you.

But sometimes the loneliness of my spirit puts out all the lights and I find myself in silent darkness. And then I recall that the blue stars and your love are just alike—eternal! Both set in the blue.

I would like folks to know that the good in me, the love of beautiful things, and every great desire, were planted in my heart by you.

I would be great for you. And I know that no greatness could possibly be satisfactory to you that wasn't unselfish.

But, rather than this, I would come to you again in that little brown suit you made for me with the brass buttons on the knees of the trousers—and I would climb into your lap and be buried in your arms and your understanding—warmed anew by the pure gold of your love.

✻ THE PELICAN ✻

I STOOD on the shore of the ocean at Miami Beach and watched a lone pelican perch upon a post that was out from the shore.

The friend at my side asked me if I knew the story of this particular pelican, and I replied that I did not. Then I was told that one day this bird and his mate were both perched upon that same post when a shot rang out—and the mate fell. That

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## JUST AMONG FRIENDS

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happened three years before. But to the same post day after day now comes this faithful pelican to see if his mate won't return to him, perhaps—or because his thoughts run to the associations of happier days.

We have a few associations that continue. Life is a moving drama—to many just a mysterious dream.

Often we go back to other days to see if we cannot warm the atmosphere of dead days so that they will shine happiness and beauty into our hearts once again.

And there is a certain compensation in this pilgrimage into the past.

But the fulness of our efforts must be ahead, not behind. Life is a gathering force, like a snowball that the small boy rolls to great size and is thrilled by. And though these little lives of ours may some day melt away like that same snowball, still there will remain results of our efforts that are sure to be absorbed into the permanence of time in the shape of love and influence.

The lone pelican returns day after day to his post by the shore where he lost his mate. Magnificent yachts pass by, unnoticed. Bathers come throughout the year and pay no attention, except occasionally to snap a picture of the bird. Even the sea shows little concern—at times it even grows mad and lashes the place where this lover of the waters is wont to perch.

And so to our past loves and hopes and ashen resolves, the world gives little note.

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## JUST AMONG FRIENDS

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✻ REBECCA McCANN ✻

MIDWAY between noon and night, darkness crept into a small chamber under a Southern sky and chilled the slumber of our little singer.

Like a star, diamonded in the deep blue of the heavens, like a flower exquisitely garbed and hidden beside a running stream, like the softest strain of a flute or violin, was the soul in song of her which had for so long sweetened the world and sprinkled it with delicate perfume.

The petals of this frail flower withered and fell, but millions will gather them up and cherish them for their fragrance and remembered beauty.

Everybody loved her. Her tiny body radiated warmth and sunshine. There was something eternal about that personality that wafted in so silently here and there, always leaving everyone happier,—and as though God had sent her to you at just the time when you needed her most.

She would never have grown up had she lived. She was a perennial little girl with all the simplicity and loveliness of a child. And to the last she remained unspoiled.

Through that brave, brief body had gone great grief. But her wit, her rare sense of humor, her deep and ofttimes astounding understanding of human character, smoothed the roughest touches of an unkind fate—and so the songs were breathed in brilliant clusters, freshly born right out of the lap of Sunshine itself.



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## JUST AMONG FRIENDS

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Exquisite couplets, set like perfect diamonds suspended in a pendant of pearls, were her lettered thoughts.

We couldn't work any longer when we heard that she had slipped away. We were left all alone and lonely. It couldn't be—yet we knew that it was.

But why at Christmas time? I wonder. Perhaps up there, too, the Christmas trees were lit and brightly glowing. Maybe "The Little Boy Blue" got lonely—and wanted his "Cheerful Cherub" to share his scattered toys.

### ✧ THE FALLEN LEAVES ✧

OUR lives are like the seasons. Sprouting and leaving in the early spring-time, budding and blooming in the later spring and summertime, ripening and growing into color and fruitage during the days of autumn, falling beautifully and peacefully with the leaves of the late fall, and nestling with the snows of winter near to the warm heart of Mother Nature.

But to rise again into newer life with the spring-time calls of unborn years!

The scheme of God is that of life. Change, transitions, journeyings—but life forever and forever.

Dying leaves, dying years, dying bodies—but living souls, born anew into billions of minutes and strung into the rosaries of endless centuries.

And so I shall not think sadly of these crumpled

leaves through which I walk, as I meditate upon the days of singing birds and mild, mellow winds warmed by the summer sun. Nor shall I regret those days of mine that have fallen with the leaves, to intermingle with the stories of the past.

What more inspiring than this symbol of the fallen leaves, God giving rebirths to people, telling them new stories about beauty and how it can be applied to make this a better world.

I loved the fragrance of the green leaves, my soul thrilled at their change to browns and golds—but as they lie upon the ground and I watch them blown by the winds of the north and west, I think of the time when they will rise again—more wonderfully gorgeous than ever.

✻ *IDEALS* ✻

**T**HE most priceless possessions in this world are ideals.

The greatest glories of beauty and happiness, that are so lavishly strewn across the world, are the result of ideals that men and women have fought for and given of their strength and time to preserve.

A man seems to be so mysteriously fortified who carries ideals around in his heart. Suffering comes. He grows lonely. Friends, who once laughed before him, and partook of his generosity, have long since ceased to care for him. The things he stands for are not popular for the moment.

But the man with ideals walks right on. His

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## JUST AMONG FRIENDS

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understanding is acute as well as gentle. There are always flowers in his heart.

How little are ideals understood or appreciated!

History is but a record of ideals. Some raised to great triumph, while others, broken and discarded, tell of the weakness or failure of him who espoused them.

But so often the broken and discarded ideals are snatched up by a fresh soldier and borne into newer battles carrying victory before them.

Anything which is worth giving little to is worth giving much to.

And so it is that men pour all that they are into ideals, and are not afraid to be misunderstood or abused, just so long as they are able to translate their noblest inner-whole toward making this a happier world.



### GOOD NIGHT!



**W**HAT a happy thought it was that inspired the first Good Night.

As though there must be some little phrase to emphasize the hunger that lies so truly in every human heart to wish another what it so much desires.

I always like to return to the hotel where the floor attendants or the bell boys or other helpers wish you a happy Good Night. When you are a stranger in a strange land it sounds so good to hear a sincere Good Night.

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## JUST AMONG FRIENDS

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What a sea of tears have wet pillows that have known no happy kiss or word Good Night.

"Good Night, Dad." "Good Night, Mother."  
"Good Night, boy." "Good Night, dear."

And then the stars drop gold-dust across the closed lids. In the blue of the far off heaven hover its glittering children, clustered like diamonds, and all is silent before a watchful God.

How good to go to sleep with a Good Night. How wonderful to wake up to find it newly born into a Good Morning!

This world is held together by its Hellos, its Handshakes, its Good Mornings and Good Nights. Just something true and real to take away with you to make your day or night happy. Some things to make the stars seem brighter and all people much better than they are painted.

And then there is just a little of heaven in the Happy "Good Night."











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